The thought which I took away from the discussion bears on the reason the laity has little faith in any kind of professional training for any calling which deals with human relationships. The sciences which treat of human relationships furnish as yet very little in the nature of specific guidance that is reliable. A physician, for instance, is trusted the more he has studied biology, chemistry and kindred sciences for the simple reason that these sciences furnish specific information which can be acted upon. Psychology and sociology, however, having nothing to offer that can in any way compare with these exact sciences in the way of verifiable principles and laws.

* * *

Saturday night, January 16, 1932

I took advantage of the opportunity offered by the walk the Karpf's and I had after the Seminar was over to tell Karpf of my plan to organize a Council for the Reconstruction etc. He cannot, of course, feel any very strong urge to grapple with the problem of Judaism. His own studies are sufficiently preoccupying to eclipse whatever phase of the problem does not have a direct bearing on social work. Besides, the aspect of religion with which Judaism is generally associated probably plays no part whatever in his thinking. It will, therefore, be all the more interesting to get him to commit himself to the kind of platform which I am trying to formulate these days.

On Wednesday as I got through with the hour on Midrash - which happened to be a particularly interesting one on account of my discovery that Ben Zoma apparently used the term (p.232) as a synonym for I was told that Phineas Kartzinel had been knocked down by an automobile on 110 St. near Fifth Ave. and seriously injured. It was impossible for me to continue teaching. I immediately took a

and got to Harlem Hospital on Lenox Ave. and 135 St. where he had been taken after the accident. Louis Finkelstein and Morris Levine had preceded me. I then learned that Kartzinel was so badly injured that if both his legs were amputated he had a slight chance to live. By the time I saw him he had been given a blood transfusion and had strenuously refused to give his consent to being operated on. He had threatened the hospital with legal prosecution if the surgeon would amputate his legs. In the meantime Dr. Nathan, who is supposed to be an authority on such cases, came and confirmed the opinion of the hospital surgeon. It then devolved upon Levine and me to go and argue with K that he should submit to the operation.

We went into the operating room and found K lying on one of the hospital wagon-beds with his head lower than the rest of the body which was raised almost at an angle of 30° to the bed. A nurse was standing by him and giving him every little while a few drops of water to quench his thirst. He recognized us as soon as we approached him and began to thank us profusely for coming. Then began the terrible tussle between him and us with regard to the operation. A hospital surgeon, apparently a Jew - was standing there with us and he kept on saying that every minutes' delay lessens the chance of survival. There was poor K struggling with death debating with himself whether or not to permit the amputation of his legs. He could not get himself to believe the surgeon's diagnosis of his case. On the other hand, if their diagnosis was the correct one then he preferred death to surviving as a cripple. He countered every one of our pleas that it was his duty to try to save his life at all costs. With his body mangled with the pallor of death on his face, the energetic clarity of his mind presented a gruesome contrast. He kept on saying that he dreaded the thought of falling a burden on people, and referred continually to the helplessness of his mother.

At one time he let drop the cruel remark "It is easy for the one who is not the victim to talk." I say "cruel," because it sums up the horrible paradox in all manner of advice and comfort to sufferers. That was the cruelty which Job inflicted on his friends. After all what did he expect them to do? If they had not come to see him they would have been guilty of being inconsiderate and hard-hearted. When they tried to comfort him it was the only thing they could have done. And what they said at first was by no means objectionable. The average sufferer apparently wants everybody else to suffer with him. Words of consolation are to him irrelevant. The exceptional person doesn't need any consolation. This is why (p. 233)

K. finally yielded and signed his name to the statement authorizing the operation with the words "I know I am signing my doom." The fact was that he had been a doomed man from the moment the automobile struck him. He died an hour or two after the operation.

I knew K from the time I met him as a student in the Junior class of the Teachers Institute, that is about six or seven years ago. He had come from the Yeshibat Isaac Elhavan and brought with him all of the mental narrowness and confusion that reign supreme in the Jewish ghetto reenforced by the cynical fanaticism of the Yeshibah. His father who had been a "Rav" died when K was six years old and left the family in great poverty. K finally completed the courses at the Institute and entered the Seminary. His mentality was considerably improved, and he was able to appreciate the value of a rational approach to tradition. Throughout his student days he worked hard to maintah himself and his mother and sisters. He was graduated as rabbi last June and got a scholarship of $1000 to continue his rabbinic studies. He was busily engaged in the study of the principle of and was making considerable progress. The accident which put an end to his life happened while he was on his way to the Seminary library. "I thought," he said as he lay on the operating

room that (p. 233)

The funeral took place on Thursday afternoon in the lecture hall of the old Seminary building. The students together with Finkelstein asked me to make the arrangements. I read the ninetieth psalm and followed it with the passage in Midrash Shir Hashirim which gives the funeral address that R. Zera delivered over R. Bun and concluded with a prayer. I was followed by Prof. Ginzberg who quoted the story about the sons of Aaron and pointed out that silence was the only thing possible in the face of such tragedy. Then came Dr. Hyamson. I had asked him merely to read a prayer, but instead he launched forth into a stereotype (p.234) which he delivers indiscriminately at all kinds of funerals. He knew very well that every minute was precious because the funeral had been delayed over an hour and a half and the cemetery might be closed by the time the hearse arrived there. Hyamson himself had given me all that information before the services. Yet he could not withstand the temptation of going through the regular performance which he imagined was expected of him. It was for that he had come all togged up in ministerial vest and coat and high hat.

The family of K behaved hysterically. The mother and sisters kept on shrieking at the top of their voices and threw themselves on the ground and on the coffin. Pandemonium reigned for a while before I could begin the services, but Hyamson frighted the hysterical women into silence. It was with great difficulty that I succeeded in controlling myself from giving way to my emotions as I went on with the service. This is Saturday night and I still feel the effects of the strain. I can hardly walk.

On Wednesday afternoon I presided at a meeting of the Teachers Institute faculty. In the course of the discussion I learned that a new evil, or an old evil in a new form, was cropping up in Jewish life. Young men who have had a smattering of Jewish knowledge open up what they call "Jewish schools" in some of the crowded Jewish sections of the city and there teach children the reading of a few prayers, and the recital of the Haftarah. This constitutes all that the parents are interested in having their children learn, and the pay sufficiently for these young men who get as many as 200 children, to earn from $4,000 to $5,000 in the course of a year.

Thursday afternoon after the funeral I attended a "tea" given in honor of Prof. Adelaide Case who had come to see me recently about giving the Unit Course in Religious Education. It is one of those perfectly meaningless performances which, I suppose, we have to go through in order to be considered in good standing.

* * *

Sunday, January 24, 1932

I formulated a tentative Platform for the conference to be held next June and sent copies for approval and corrections to Rabbi Solomon Goldman of Chicago, Dr. Dushkin, Benderly, Honor, M.J. Karpf, Felix Levy (Chicago), Louis I. Newman, Gamoran, Golub, Kadushin and Shalom Spiegel, Rabbi Rubenovitz. I sent them last week. So far I heard only from Wise and Benderly. I have an appointment with Benderly tomorrow.

At the meeting of the Editorial Board of Opinion (last Thursday) Maurice Samuel got off some clever wise cracks. Apro os of some one saying that Wise the father and Wise the son were approaching each other in manner of writing Samuel told the story of Shmaryin Lewin

who asked Who was Zivion" (a journalist on the Vorfarzs staff) and when he was told it was Dr. Hoffman he said (p.235)

. The analogy was not in good taste, but Samuels is the last person in the world to forego a wisecrack.

Speaking of lecturing he said "I do the lecturing" (pointing to Wise) he gets paid and he (pointing to Edman) knows how.

Wise told an interesting story which sheds light on Bergson's attitude to Jewish life. They were both being entertained at the home of the English Lord Rothschild during the time that the peace negotiations were going on. Wise discoursed on Zionism. There were others who disagreed with him. When Lady Rothschild asked Bergson what he thought of the argument he replied "If I had any Jewish feeling I would say that Rabbi Wise was right."

I finished yesterday by Trotzky (translated from the Russian by) which I read with a great deal of gusto.

Edmund Wilson's "What I Believe" in the Nation of Jan. 27/32 is exactly what I believe.

* * *

Tuesday, January 26, 1932

I discussed yesterday the tentative Platform with Dr. Benderly from 4:30 to 7:00 at his office. He is temperamentally opposed to commitments to a credo and he would start a hornet's nest if he were to sign his name to the credo contained in the platform. It took him fifty minutes to say that.

* * *

Saturday night, January 30, 1932

I just came back from Dr. Spiegel's with whom I spent two hours. The main part of the conversation dealt with the question whether or not the Israelites brought monotheism with them from the

wilderness. We always find ourselves in fundamental disagreement on that question. He refuses to accept the evolutionary conception of monotheism. I asked him to explain to me the meaning of the sentence (p.236) . He labored very hard to bring it into consonance with his theory that was not a proper noun.

His approach to Judaism seems to be the same as that of Buber and Rosenzwieg/about whom I at present know very little. It is a pity that my time is so limited that I cannot get to them.

There is something in me that responds to the mysticism which Spiegel falls back upon whenever he discusses the Jewish conception of God. That idea of Israel's eternity as inherent in the very blood hypnotizes me every time he mentions it to me. I can very well understand how young people yield to its spell. But as soon as I am left to myself it works havoc with me. I simply cannot integrate it into my thinking, yet it creates in me a discontent with my own pragmatic approach.

I had given a copy of the tentative Platform to Spiegel and I wanted to get his comments on it. I should have known that to one minded as he is this kind of approach must appear irrelevant. Yet I am glad I got his reaction to it. I realize now that its present form fails to do justice to the main purpose I have in mind: that of so defining Judaism that all Jews who want to remain Jews shall find a place in it and then to translate that definition into a program of action.

Dushkin who is taking an active part in bringing about the conference which is to deal with the problem of reconstruction happened to be in New York and he came to see me tonight. We discussed some of the steps to be taken in preparing for the conference.

A passing reference was made today at the SAJ services to the

fact that it is the tenth anniversary of the founding of the SAJ.

I feel very badly over the fact that I stayed away from the meeting of the Histadrut Ibrit in honor of Sokolow which took place tonight at the SAJ house. The fear that I might be asked to speak kept me away.

* * *

Tuesday, March 22, 1932

The original Platform of the Society for Reconstructionism of Judaism (or Jewish life) has undergone two metamorphoses. Dr. Dushkin's illness has delayed matters.

There is a possibility that the Seminar on Social Justice to be conducted with a number of Seminary graduates might materialize.

I am scheduled to read a paper on the place of dogma in Jewish life at the next convention of the Rabbinical Assembly which will be held in this city May 11-15.

Last night I attended the banquet given to S. Orlans before his leaving for Palestine to become the business manager of the (p.237)

a corporation organized by Israel Matz. Those affairs are a source of annoyance to me because of the speaking that I have to do and the time I have to waste. The less often I attend them the more difficult I find it to adjust myself to them, and the more awkward and labored my talks on those occasions are likely to be.

I preached at the SAJ services on Feb. 6, 13 and March 19.

I have had the doldrums a number of times during the last two months. The moments of exaltation have been few and far between. The rest of the time I have spent on low flats with sky leaden and dull.

I experienced a momentary gleam of satisfaction today after I participated in the discussion of the projected new College. I had been invited to the discussion by Prof. Alexander who is the moving spirit of the project.

In my remarks I described the two outstanding conceptions of religion: 1) as a transcendent phenomenon; 2) as an immanent phenomenon. I also had occasion to point out the reason for the inadequacy of the empirical or Socratic method of teaching philosophy, religion and ethics, as being the fact that one can ask more questions than it is possible to answer in a manner intelligible to the questioner, if he lacks a systematic knowledge of background.

* * *

Thursday, March 24, 1932

De Sola Poole sent me a copy of an article he has been asked to write on the relation of the State to Church in education. For some reason he couldn't manage to come to my office at the Seminary to get my criticism and I volunteered to give it to him over the phone, which I did today at 2:30. I expressed my annoyance at his presentation of the case of the Jews in such a way as to make them appear an obstructionist minority to any legitimate attempt of the majority to include in the curriculum the ethical and spiritual implications of the subject matter taught. He made it appear that the Jews were uncompromisingly opposed to the presentation in the school of any aspect of religion. He emphatically deprecated non-sectarian religion as tending to make ethical culturists out of the pupils.

To my surprise he told me that he agreed with all I said.

He alluded to the fact he was a member of the Inter-faith Committee as proof that he took the same attitude as I did. But what he did in the paper was to set forth the opinion of the Conference of American Rabbis and the United Synagogue and similar bodies which have expressed themselves on the subject. This is just like Poole.

Miss Krasnow, a former graduate of the Institute, who has been teaching chemistry in the College of Physicians & Surgeons, was married last year to Mr. Thau. I officiated at the wedding. Because I had refused to take any fee she and her husband commissioned Goodelman to make a plaque for which I sat a number of times last fall. The plaque is to be hung at the Teachers Institute building on Sat. night, April 2. But it is a case of (p.238) . They want to engrave at the bottom an inscription to the effect that it was presented to me in memory of her parents. I have called in Morris Levine to advise what to do. Perhaps he will succeed in persuading her that such inscription is extremely inappropriate.

Last night after the session of the Seminar of the Graduate School (change of name went recently into effect) for Jewish Social Workers, M.J. Karpf told me that Warburg had spoken to him in more emphatic terms than ever before of the need of merging the Graduate School with the Seminary. Karpf has been pumping me to find out what I thought of the scheme. It soon developed in the discussion that he was chiefly interested in getting me to suggest the man that ought to head the entire group of institutions that would be combined in the Seminary, Institute and Graduate School. I think he wants to persuade me that it is not the kind of a job I ought to aspire to and that he would be the logical man for it. He can have it with all my heart. I really am not in the least interested in a merger of institutions which would be merely an administrative unit and would not be

able to identify itself with a constructive and forward looking philosophy of Jewish life.

* * *

Saturday night, March 26, 1932

Henry M. Rosenthal and his wife visited us today. As religious director of the YMHA he is utterly frustrated in his ambition to win his spurs in the world of letters and his soul is crushed because he has to be a barker for ideas and beliefs which he regards as absolutely useless if not misleading. His sympathetiesare entirely with the Communist movement.

* * *

Sunday, March 27, 1932

Communism is eating into the vitals of rabbinic and social work. The students in the Seminary and in the Graduate School are seriously troubled about the contempt in which their respective callings are held in the communist philosophy of life. I have been trying very hard to find a rationale wherewith to counter this growing sense of inferiority in the rabbis and social workers, but I am fully aware that I am merely trying to rationalize something which at heart I consider untenable.

The main objection which I raise against communism is its advocacy of violence as indispensable in the overthrow of the capitalistic regime. When Rosenthal advanced the argument that the ruling classes resorted to violence as soon as they felt they were about to lose their throttle hold on the rest of society, I said that the habits of millenia cannot be overcome in a century. It will undoubtedly take a long time before education will become effective as a means of social reform, but education is a process which cannot be skipped. Even after violence attains its objects, education has to be imparted to prevent those objects from being lost and to learn how to use them properly.

Tuesday, March 29, 1932

This morning I gave a talk on "What We Should Aim at in Jewish Education" before a group of women under the auspices of the New York Chapter of the United Synagogue.

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Miss Snyder or Schneider, who is working with Prof. Alexander of Teachers College on the organization of the New College, came to see me a second time today. I wonder why I am being consulted so frequently and how she knew of me. Is it merely the fact that my name is included in the Teachers College Register for this term as giving the unit course on Judaism?

* * *

Thursday, March 31, 1932

The observance of Kashrut is a phase of Jewish life I cannot get myself to repudiate. I consider it a necessary folkway and in Judaism as a Civilization I suggest some modification that would have to be instituted to bring the practice in line with the modern exigencies of life. I have included Kashrut in the Tentative Platform of the Society for the Reconstruction of Jewish Life. Only a few days ago I received a letter from Solomon Lowenstein, in which he expresses his consent to everything in that Platform except the item about Kashrut.

Yesterday the student at the Seminary, Israeltan, preached a sermon on shehitah. He took that subject at my suggestion. My discussion of the sermon in class gave rise to a heated debate on the subject. Dr. Gordis and Solomon Goldfarb tried hard to break down my defense of Shehitah but did not succeed.

My argument in brief was as follows: Shehitah is in keeping with the tendency in Judaism to accept the functions of life and to spiritualize them. Among these functions there is the cruel need of man using animal food -- assuming, of course, that animal food is

indispensable to his physiological constitution. There are three alternatives possible with regard to the use of animal food. One is to ignore it or to try to forget it, the second alternative is to accept the fact of its cruelty and do nothing about and the third is to spiritualize or transfigure it in some way. The first is mere cowardly evasion, the second is to accept evil as ultimate, the third is to reduce evil to a minimum. That is itself a spiritual act. Shehitah represents this third alternative.

I mentioned the analogy of the Greek attitude toward slavery to point out wherein it differed from the cause of eating animal food. Gordis argued that the two cases were exactly parallel. This is not the first time that I have Gordis give expression to extreme scepticism of spiritual or qualitative values, and yet he is just the kind of man who will always set himself in opposition to any progressive measures I may have occasion to suggest.

This morning Louis Finkelstein, Eugene Kohn and I met to see whether it would be possible to carry out the mandate of the Rabbinical Assembly to have a committee appointed to bring in at the coming convention some kind of Platform that what indicate the attitude of the Rabbinical Assembly on the fundamental problem of Jewish life. A committee of nine was appointed after that meeting of the Executive Committee at which I got very much excited about the way Levinthal and Finkelstein tried to kill the resolution which had been passed at the last convention. The committee met three times, I believe, and there have been sub-committee meetings besides. For a time it looked as though the plan of having a symposium would work out. But when it came to translating that plan into concrete form it broke down. The three of us who met today tried to save it but in vain. Finkelstein is heat upon one thing and that is to have the Rabbinical Assembly

present a solid front to the outside world. I on the other hand could not see how that could be done. I hoped that it would be possible to have the Rabbinic Assembly accept the fact of its heterogeneous character and at the same time bring that fact under some larger category like that of Judaism as a civilization, thereby achieving variety in unity.

Louis Finkelstein is evidently very sure of himself as voicing the attitude of the majority of the graduates in matters Jewish. He challenged me, in the course of the discussion this morning, to put the matter to a vote among those holding rabbinical positions in and about New York.

* * *

Sunday, April 3, 1932

I forgot to include in my summary on the preceding page of what I said about Shehitah the statement I made to the students that if any method of killing the animal could be definitely proved as being more humane than shehitah it ought by all means replace the latter.

I ought to know better than to take myself so seriously as to make sure of recording everything I had occasion to say about Shehitah. But I don't propose to justify the many foolish things I do.

Last night Dr. Krasnow presented me with the bronze plaque for which I had sat. The plaque was hung in the Teachers Institute library. Chipkin and Eisenberg and Miss Krasnow spoke in glowing terms of me and I made my innocuous little speech of acceptance. All this took place in the presence of a small gathering including a few members of the Institute Faculty. The plaque is probably good from an artistic point of view, but it is certainly not calculated to make me fall in love with myself.

* * *

Saturday night, April 9, 1932

I keep on concocting schemes all the time on the average I should say, of one a week. A week ago yesterday I proposed to Finkelstein that he and I and a few more of the Seminary #elect" should set up a kind of (p.241) in the Seminary. It would help to put the Seminary on the map, for the large number of Jews who have not heard of its existence, or only so distantly as to call it "cemetery."

The second scheme was hatched at the luncheon conference with Eisenstein and Mrs. Kahan last Monday at the Seminary cafeteria. The plan is to institute a sort of consultation hour at the SAJ house to give advice to people in trouble or who find themselves socially and spiritually maladjusted.

* * *

Sunday, Apri 10, 1932

A third scheme was the organization of a group of young people from among the students and graduates of the various departments of the Teachers Institute who would present Anglo-Jewish plays. The group is to be known as Institute Players.

That idea grew out of the conversation with Kutai and his wife, who had dinner with us on Friday night a week ago. The next day when I mentioned the scheme to Morris Levine he had nothing to say about it but he denounced the Hanukkah entertainment which had been staged by Kutai. This raised the question in my mind whether Kutai was the man to carry out the idea about Institute Players.

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At the seminars of the graduating class of Graduate School of Jewish Social Workers, the last one of which met last Wednesday, I found myself contributing practically all the ideas toward a philosophy both of social work in general and Jewish social work in particular.

The basic conception that it is the function of the social worker to maintain a dynamic equilibrium between the interests of the individual and those of society has proved extremely fruitful.

I was very much thrilled last evening when I came across J. Ziegler's conception of God in the second volume of his "Die outliche Welt des Judentums." It is in exact accord with the conception which I have expressed a number of times both in this Journal and in some of the things I've written butnot published.

Another thrilling experience I had last night was listening to the glorified series of sermons given in the new play by Bernard Shaw "Too True to Be Good." I could not hold back my tears during the closing speech of that play.

I find the teaching at the Teachers Institute Sunday afternoons quite an ordeal. In trying to conform to the wishes of my colleagues on the Faculty to foster a Hebraic atmosphere in the institution, I have been torturing myself into teaching in Hebrew and torturing a number of students in the class to whom it is as unnatural to think in Hebrew as it is to me. I suspect that the reason I find it so hard to think and express myself in Hebrew is due to some subconscious resistance to what I feel to be an unnatural procedure, or to the inner conflict and indecision of which I am the victim. After all these years I am still vacillating between emphasis on content regardless of language and emphasis upon Hebrew as indispensable to experiencing as a Jew. In the meantime I am probably throwing away a golden opportunity to influence the lives of the young people I am teaching. If I could abandon myself completely to the ideas and values of Judaism or if I could devote part of the time to some actual experience of the mood of prayer, I might have left a lasting and wholesome impression on their lives.

Monday, April 11, 1932

In my enthusiasm over the discovery of a rabbi who really took the trouble to think intensively about the God idea and who had the courage to say what he believed though it was not in conformity with tradition, I said that I was in complete agreement with the conception he arrived at. (see previous page about J. Ziegler.) This is not exactly true. Ziegler recognizes the independent existence of Chaos against whihh God struggles. I prefer to ascribe the evil in the world to Chance or Accident, which is mere negation.

I am just now struggling to formulate in popular language the significance of individuality. The difficulty of making myself understood is due to the rarity of introspective thinking. Such thinking has been laughed out of court by psychologists and pragmatists. The psychologists claiming to be scientists consider it the proper thing to explain facts and events in terms of other facts and events which are regarded as having caused them. Self-causation has no place in science. The pragmatists likewise find it necessary to explain every concept in terms of the difference it makes in other concepts. There is everywhere the tendency to fly from the center of generation to the periphery of effects or to explain the center itself as the periphery of some other center of generation the inherent nature of which we need not take the trouble to understand. The truth seems to be that in self-causation we come against an ultimate mystery which we cannot resolve completely into otherness, a mystery that baffles our neat intellectual formularies.

And yet how inescapably real is this indivisible and ultimate generative center of energy which is not merely acted upon but acts upon others. This is probably what Eusteus is trying to impress upon the modern mind in his routing the Newtonian mechanistic theory of

universe. Unfortunately I know nothing of his ideas. But though I may be wrong in ascribing this emphasis upon the inherent centrality of the units of being or energy to Einstein I still believe that this self-determination of these units is the most important fact about them.

I know nothing about such units of energy as electrons but I can see a seed and appreciate the aspect of its acting as by far a more striking fact than that it is acted upon. But in no unit of being is there that element of self-awareness which distinguishes the human being. By means of this self-awareness he is in a position to increase the measure of self-determination by the process of self-conditioning.

The foregoing analysis reveals what has been chiefly responsible for the snarl into which those who discussed the freedom of the human will got themselves. They all proceeded from the assumption that self-determination or freedom of the will is inextricably bound up with self-knowledge. Finding that human beings misjudge their actions, and are unaware of factors that determine them in acting in a particular way most thinkers and scientists have come to the conclusion that freedom is an illusion. But the fact is that whether we think we are free or not we are by the very fact of our being alive self-determining to some degree.

* * *

Tuesday, April 12, 1932

I gave this morning the first of the series of lectures which one of the unit courses at Teachers College. Although I had the outline carefully prepared and although I have discussed the subject matter innumerable times with different groups I was not at all at my ease while I lectured. I had to keep on groping for the right words to express what I had to say. I do not know to what I should ascribe the painful self-consciousness I often experience while speaking in public. I must be inwardly contending against some kind of

subconscious inhibitions. It seems to me that if I could just let myself go I could pour forth a torrent of words that would burn and sear all the lies and superstitions and light up the skies of truth. Yet there I sit haltingly uttering thin and colorless words that don't convey the slightest suggestion of the emotions pent up within me struggling to free themselves through word and action. The after effect of every such experience is shattering to my health and peace of mind.

* * *

Saturday night, April 16, 1932

I was much more successful with the lecture I gave at Teachers College on Thursday. I was very happy to learn from one of the students in the class, a man who is teaching in the college at Atlanta that the information I imparted to him in the course of the lecture would help him in dealing with the Jewish students attending that college.

What often worries and frightens me is the feeling of dullness I experience in my head when I find myself among a group of people whom I don't know very well and am in fear of being called upon to speak. I believe that feeling is due to a state of nervousness which inhibits the digestive process and causes gas to accumulate in my system. Whenever I feel that way I suffer a partial aphasia. I forget names, and I lose all power of giving variegated expression to what I want to say because the range of my vocabularly becomes shrunken.

* * *

Sunday, April 17, 1932

One of the functions of reinterpretation of traditional values is to reappraise those values or to change emphases. Far more pertinent to present conditions than the threadworn scripture "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," or even "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is the scripture "Without planning a nation sinks" (Prov. 11, 14).

It seems to me that the pragmatic significance of the attribute of infinity ascribed to God is what that attribute implies with regard to the aspect of potentiality for good which inheres in the universe. It certainly is impossible to accept life on the basis of the actual. The belief in God is therefore essentially the attitude of mind which reckons with the latent possibilities for good.

Yehiel Heilprin called on me yesterday afternoon. He is one of the (p.245) who keep the world going. His particular is Hebrew kindergartens. He worked his idea in Odessa, Palestine and lastly in Russia. Bialik, Ussischkin and Greenbaum were his most ardent supporters. He published with the assistance of the musician Engel and noted artists some excellent kindergarten literature He edited a Hebrew magazine dealing solely with kindergarten problems. He came to this country and after meditating and orienting himself to the American Jewish scene for about six months he has been trying to infect susceptible people like myself with his microbe. The first question I asked him was, of course, whether he had consulted Benderly. He told me that he had, but that he had not received any encouragement Benderly's contention was that the problem of Jewish education is essentially with the adolescent and not with the young children. It seems to me that B. is wrong in transferring the center of interest entirely to the adolescent. Judaism is both experience and idea. To acquire Judaism as idea one must first have it as experience. Adolescence is altogether too late for the acquisition of experience. Childhood on the other hand is too early for the understanding of such ideas as constitute the thought element in Judaism.

Y. Heilperin. 1880–1942 Zionist Educator; Kindergartens in E Europe + Palestine.

Here is work to do in Jewish life for any one who has the energy and initiative. Start a compaign to reorganize the process of Jewish education. Abolish all the children's religious and Hebrew schools. Put the entire responsibility upon the home. Give the mothers and fathers the responsibility of giving their children Jewish habits and experiences. Bar-mizvah and confirmation should mean admission to schools for thought content such as history, religion, literature.

* * *

Monday, April 18, 1932

Having felt keenly disappointed in the lesson in Jewish Religion I gave to the Junior class of the TI a week ago yesterday, and being certain that the inadequacy of the lesson was entirely due to the fact that I conducted it in Hebrew, I came to the class yesterday with my mind made up that I wasn't going to experience another such frustration. All I needed to do was to free myself and the class of the straitjacketing process of conducting the discussion in Hebrew. I told the students that I wanted to use the occasion for a heart to heart talk in which there would be untrammeled mutuality. They at once got into the spirit of what I suggested and although the greater part of the time was devoted to answering questions of the two students, Miss Hershenof and Kaplan the rest of the class were fully alive to the three cornered arguments from beginning to end. Miss Hershenof found fault with the course because in representing Jewish religion as a historic development it shattered her faith in Judaism. Kaplan represented the opposite extreme. Though he agreed that the aspect of life's worthwhileness was acceptable to reason he couldn't see why we need call it God, or use the name God at all. I believe that I managed to convince both students as well as those who silently sided with them that they were wrong. One thing I am sure of and that is that the students went away feeling that they learned something which would help them in their general outlook on Judaism.

The sense of satisfaction which I derived from the work at the TI was not destined to last very long, because at night I had to attend the second of he lecture supper dance evenings given by the SAJ this year. Seldom have I gotten any joy out of anything connected with the SAJ and last night was no exception. Maurice Samuel had been scheduled to speak on his recent Book "Jews on Approval." Having taken for granted that I would be asked to serve as chairman and to introduce him. I spent some time Saturday night thinking what I was going to say. When I came to the Delmonico Hotel where the affair was to take place Eisenstein informed me that he would preside. That squelched the little talk about Samuel as a (p.247) or revivalist which I had primed myself to give. I wasn't a bit annoyed, however, although my protestation to that effect would seem to prove that I was. Samuel's talk was excellent. It was a brilliant summary of the latter half of his book. It was very wise of him to avoid dealing with the question of the personalities which form the subject matter of the first part of his book. There were quite a few in the audience who were prepared to raise a rumpus in case he had approached his subject from that angle. In fact Jacob Klein, the chairman of the SAJ in the few remarks introducing Eisenstein which he had prepared a week before, intended to take Samuel to task for his attacking David A. Brown. Fortunately Eisenstein to whom Klein had shown his little speech, deleted the part of it which dealt with Brown.

I couldn't help marveling at the fecund and distinguished diction which Samuel used in his talk. As for the content of his argument I could agree only with its pragmatic implication, but not with its analyses, and interpretations. When I was called upon to ask a question or make a statement I was at a loss what to say. If I would disagree with his presentation of the case I would have played into the hands of the majority of the audience who were only too ready to find all

kinds of excuses for making no attempt to acquire Jewish culture. To guard myself against such a misstep I went to the other extreme of taking sides with Samuel to the extent of proving by a specific example how just he had been in his contention. The result was that I called down on myself the wrath of the young folks, of May Lamport and Lena. Miss Machlowitz, who was present, took down what I said and I herewith append it, first in order to show how unjustified Lena was for taking me violently to task for what I said, and secondly as an example of the nervous and watery diction I employ whenever I speak extempore.

After the lecture I squabbled with May Lamport over the remarks I had made. After I got through with her the physician, Dr. Ruskin was palavering to me on what I ought to do to interest people in Judaism. What he said didn't interest me in the slightest until we came upon the subject of Russia. He informed me that he had occasion to treat a large number of those sent by Russia to do business with this country. The Amtory organization, I believe. Without exception each and every one he has had anything to do with deplored bitterly that they had to go back to Russia after a stay of two years in this country. They detest their regime butthey can't help themselves. I wonder how much truth there is to what he says. When I mentioned these allegations later in the evening to Sam Lamport who is also in touch with Russian conditions,he scouted them.

Joe Levy pulled me over to his table and introduced me to some of his friends from out of town whomhe had invited to the affair. There was a Mr. Goldstein, who represented himself as having been brought up in an Orthodox environment. He did not find Orthodoxy to his liking so he swung over to Reform. Soon that displeased him and now he is in a state of doubt and confusion. After I tried to explain to him what the SAJ stood for he asked me whether I was fundamentalist. In the

menatime some one volunteered to sing one or two Jewish songs. After the man was through singing I expatiated on the words of the song. The last song was about a R. Menashe who was so absorbed in the study of the Talmud that there wasn't enough for Shabbos, and no provision for a dowery for his daughter. This is what the wife informs him and she suggests that he stop studying and try to meet his domestic responsibilities, etc. After I got through explaining the significance of such folk ballads Mr. Goldstein said "You know what I was thinking? I was saying to myself 'What a pity that a man should waste such a good singing voice on such songs when he could be using it to sing popular airs that everybody is interested in'" Poor Samuel! Poor me! We had been laboring all evening to convince Mr. Goldstein that he ought to discipline himself into the acquisition of Jewish culture and his remark shows how much we've succeeded.

* _____ * *

Tuesday, April 19, 1932

And yetit cannot be said that all our efforts are futile. Among the other guests of Joe Levy sitting at the same table with Goldstein was a young girl a classmate of Miriam's at Wisconsin University. From what Joe told me, she was brought up in a radically atheistic atmosphere. She has had not contacts whatever with things Jewish until recently when she attended some meetings at which Zionism was discussed. And now she is eager to go to Palestine as a Chaluzah. She was very much interested in what I had to say in my discussion with the self-satisfied Jewish Rotarian Goldstein, and as I rose to get away she asked for an appointment to discuss further with her the advisability of going to Palestine.

The brothers Abraham and Elliot M. Burnstein are both rabbis and graduates of the Seminary. In a conversation at the Seminary cafe-

teria yesterday Abrahsm said "My brother has it much easier than I do. The other day his boy arrived from San Francisco and stopped with me. When he saw me put on the tefilin he said "What's that?" I have never seen my father do that." The boy is in his fourteenth year.

* * *

Wednesday, April 20, 1932

According to Eisenstein, Prof. Salo Baron, concerning whom I had gotten the impression from Shalom Spiegel, I believe, that he has no interest in religion, is said to put on Tefilin daily. Whether that is true or not I have become convinced as a result of my work on the Pesah sermon that I ought to resume the practice of putting on the tefilin daily. It is very evidently symbolic of freedom. The law in the Talmud that a slave who is allowed to put on Tefilin is thereby manumitted. And freedom as I interpret it in the sermon is the indispensable prerequisite to experiencing the reality of God or the ~~xxxxxx~~ worthwhileness of life. Unless I record to the contrary, I will resume and continue the practice of putting on Tefilin daily.

* * *

Sunday, April 24, 1932

Am just now following out what I had promised myself: sitting with my tefilin on and reading ~~Taanit~~ Taanit. I just came across a statement which indicates how dangerously Torahlotry borders on idolatry: (p.249)

To which I add: when I read the foregoing:

In today's Times (magazine section) a criminal analyzing the cause of crime is right in charging up a good deal to the neglect of churches. The priests and ministers instead of taking a close interest in the problems of their people are concerned with politics or inter-

national questions. But in this diversion of the ministers from their rightful function who is to blame? The scholars who insist upon the rabbis being scholars and the people who insist upon the rabbis being orators. The rabbis wanting to stand in well with his Seminary from which he wants to obtain a higher degree and with the people from whom he wants to get a higher salary ~~xhxx~~ are sham scholars and second rate orators and not even third rate pedagogues.

* * *

Monday, April 25, 1932

Anent the subject of "Torah lotry" only yesterday the Jewish morning Journal had a news item about a Torah scroll that had been stolen from a synagogue in Brooklyn and burned. Fragments of the scroll were discovered and the entire community is in an uproar. But the reaction is not merely indignation over a shameful theft. It is exactly the same as that of an ancient pagan village whose idol was destroyed. The members of the congregation are making preparations to bury the fragments, on Sunday, the first of May (there is evidently the purpose of getting a huge crowd and perhaps making a big collection) with pomp and ceremony. In the meantime the desecreated Torah lies in the synagogue and hundreds of Jews from Brooklyn and New York are coming to see the burned fragments which lie upon a table covered with a Talit. The members of the congregation are observing mourning rites and saying kaddish.

I had as guest for Seder this year (last Wednesday night) Dr. Limbert. He is the first gentile I have ever had at my table. This is how it came about. Last Tuesday as I was sitting in the Seminary cafeteria having lunch afterhaving taught at Teachers College, Rabbi Fisher who had been present in the class came over and intimated that I ought to invite Dr. Limbert to Seder. Limbert is a graduate clergy-

man and professor of Bible in the college at Lancaster. This yearhe is working at Teachers College in the department of religious education. He takes charge of the observ tion work of the students and in that way has come in close touch with some Jewish schools headed by the few rabbis who are taking courses in TC. He has been present at every one of the lectures I have been giving the last week or two in TC. He is a young man in the early thirties, slim and blond and soft spoken. When Fisher mentioned to me that Limbert had expressed a wish to see a Seder I at once said that I would be glad to have him.

The Seder was carried out very beautifully as usual. The only change I made in addition to omitting (p.251) סמוך ונראה which I had done for many years, was to omit the part of the Haggadah which enumerates the plagues. I hope to stick by this change in the coming years, if God will grant me life. The next evening, it is true, I recited that part again, but that was because I had as guests my brother-in-law Jacob Rubin and his son-in-law Jacobson. I was afraid they might have felt that I cheated out of something indispensable if I had not recited the number of plagues. (I refer only to the 10 plagues not to the fanciful midrashim about them, which I had also be in the habit of omitting.)

Limbert spoke admiringly of the Jewish trait of weaving the religion into the homelife as exemplified by the Seder ceremony. He also made the point that Jews have a rich history to draw upon for their spiritual values. Not so the church. "What for example, could we draw upon?" he asked. "The Crusades? They are hardly inspiring from a spiritual standpoing."

Thursday morning the SAJ synagogue was full. That means that there were present between 350 and 400 people. About twenty students of the class in TC to which I am giving the unit course were also

present. They are all with one exception gentiles. The attendance of the students was prearranged and counted in place of the lecture that I should otherwise have had to give that day.

I spoke on Freedom as a Spiritual Ideal. I floundered a bit during the first sentence or two but by the time I got to the third sentence I had full control of myself and put the sermon across quite effectively. There were no regrets following it.

* * *

Saturday night, April 30, 1932

I concluded the unit courses at Teachers College last Tuesday. I was pleased with myself because I managed to give the class full outlines for all of the lectures. In place of a test I asked them to write out a statement in answer to the following question: What notions formerly held by you concerning Judaism have you unlearned as a result of the unit course; what ideas have you found significant and interesting, and what ideas questionable or vague? From the replies that have so far been handed in I gather that the course was successful.

On the seventh day of Pesah quite a number of the old standbys in the SAJ called at my home, Unterberg, Semel, Wachman, Joe Levy, Thompson, Rosenblat, etc. After the exchange of old "chestnuts" between Semel and Rosenblatt the discussion centered upon proposed improvements in the SAJ service and incidentally upon the question of increasing the membership. The improvements dealt with the problem of the long time - about 12 to 15 minutes - that the people had to stand during the recital of the Mussaph Amidah. It all sounded so trivial that I just sat and smiled. Unterberg then gave his periodic song and dance about the importance of having the young men called up to "maftir" as if the very future of Judaism depended upon that. Seeing that it was all a "talkfest" I piped out with the suggestion that we introduce

an organ. Of course the mere fact that it would mean an added expense rules it out of consideration, but I intentionally give them these little pricks to remind them we are not Orthodox. I am sure that Semel is trying to smuggle Orthodoxy into the service gradually and that his purpose in insisting upon thepeople being permitted to sit down after the Kidusha is to reintroduce the silent Amidah before it is recited by the Cantor.

On the eighth day the synagogue was crowded as it hasn't been since the High Holidays. The memorial services are the main attraction. Eisenstein gave his sermon before the memorial services and made an appeal for contributions in memory of the departed of sums not less than five nor more than ten dollars. More than $1000 was realized.

Yesterday (Friday) I attended the preliminary discussion of the Seminar which is to meet under the auspices of the Religious Education Association next week. The discussion took place at the Faculty House of Columbia University, 117 St. and Morningside Drive.

L. Finkelstein, as chairman of the committee on Platform of the Rabbinical Assembly is unwilling to come before the convention with a confession of failure to get the committee to arrive at any kind of satisfactory working plan. He is therefore trying hard to take advantage of the shortness of time between now and the convention to adopt his half baked conciliatory platitudes as representative of the views of the Rabbinical Assembly. He sent me a copy of the report he proposed to make and asked me for my criticism. I spent about three quarters of an hour with him yesterday morning discussing his proposed report. I did all I could to control myself and not to tell him what I thought of his jesuitry. But it surely was a terrible strain on my nerves.

In the evening, Lena 'phoned to find out whether he and his wife would be at home because we wanted to call on them. It is a few months since he moved into his new apartment. In the meantime his wife gave birth to a baby. I had not called during all that time. Again I was irritated when I heard Lena being told by their maid that neither he nor his wife answered the phone on the Sabbath. When we came to the door of his apartment we found it open, presumably for those who don't want to ring he bell. He wore his cap all the time we stayed at his house. I wouldn't mind all these displays of Orthodoxy -- on the contrary I would respect him for them -- if he were Orthodox in his beliefs. But knowing that he is just as radical in his convictions about the origin of the religious practices I can see no justification for all these assumed airs of Orthodoxy, especially as they are employed as I believe -- quite consciously -- to augment his hold on certain powers that he is trying to acquire.

On the other hand my own situation is a very trying one. This is illustrated by what happened at my own table when my children saw how irritated I was by Finkelstein's refusal to answer the phone. They challenged me to explain the difference between answering the telephone and riding on the Sabbath. I must admit that I was non-plussed. What could I say? What plausible criterion could I suggest that might serve one as a guide in informing us what may and what may not be done on the Sabbath, except the very vague one of being in accord with the Sabbath spirit.

It is hard, almost insuferably hard, to be a Jew in the Diaspora, because of the Goyim and it is dangerous to be a Jew in Palestine because of the Arabs.

* * *

Friday, May 6, 1932

I am in a very bad mood just now discontented with myself and with all the world. "This lousy stinking world" is the phrase that formed itself in my mind as I was walking to the Seminary this morning. A contributory cause to this fit of sulkiness is the series of interruptions that accentuate my inability to express with ease and fullness whenever I have occasion to write or say anything. I am at work now on a paper for the convention of the National Conference for Jewish Education which is to take place the week after next. I have to stop writing because I have to get ready for the Sabbath. The last sentence I penned was "If Sisyphus were alive today he would be a Jewish educator in America."

At this minute I learned that the president of France was shot. I wasn't so wrong in my idea of the world, was I?

* * *

Monday, May 16, 1932

These last twelve days have been for me full of interesting activity. First came the experience of being a contributor to the Seminar Group I which took place under the auspices of The Religious Education Association on May 4 th and 5th at the Casa Italiana on Amsterdam Ave. and 117 St. Dr. Limbert of the Religious Education Department at Teachers College who helped to organize the Seminar had invited me to take part in it. As a rule I keep away from discussions of this kind because I have the feeling that the mere fact of their being participated in by people of the most diverse outlooks and backgrounds is bound to prevent any searching analysis of the matters discussed or complete frankness in the statement of one's views. This time, however, the invitation having come to me in a personal form from Limbert with whom I was to be associated during the period that I was to give the unit course in Teachers College, I could not refuse.

And I am very glad now that I took part in the Seminar; in the first place because it afforded me an occasion to probe the fundamentals of the ethical life, secondly, because it broke me into the practice of exchanging ideas with Gentiles, and thirdly, because it taught me the use of the Seminar method for such purposes as I shall myself want to use it.

I do not think I am egotistical, if I say that if it were not for the direction which I gave to the discussion the Seminar would have floundered without arriving even at a common understanding of the problem. The topic was "The Changes Going on in Sanctions for Conduct." At the preliminary discussion of the Seminar group, which had taken place on Friday, April 29 it became evident that it was necessary to substitute the word "Standards" for "Sanctions." That topic was divided into four sets of questions. The questions were very poorly formulated. If they had been the basis of the discussion we would have gotten ourselves into a hopeless mess. I therefore made it my business before I came to the Seminar to think through the question of ethical standards and to formulate a problem which would embrace all of the four sets of questions. My thoughts on the subject fell into the following order:

I. The validation of standards and purposes which functioned in the past was based on

a. the belief in the supernatural origin of those standards and the sanctions of reward and punishment in terms of salvation either in the here or in the hereafter.

b. The social prestige of those who transmitted or promulgated the standards.

II. That validation has become inoperative as a result of

a. the denial of the supernatural origin of the standards and the altered conception of salvation, and

b. the discovery that those who upheld those standards were at least subconsciously not disinterested in their vested interests maintenance

III. The reaction from the past authoritarianism is nihilistic individualism which has found support in

a. the theory of the survival of the fittest and the ideal of success as essentially the power to outdo one's fellows

b. the Freudian psychology which has been interpreted as deprecating self-suppression.

IV. The possibility of social reconstruction that shall make for peace and security lies in the emergence of an understanding of and regard for personality. Such possibility rests on the following facts

a. The growing recognition of personality in human beings hitherto not credited with it -- children, women, non-Christians, the disinterested.

b. the faith in and desire for personality is the basis of allegiance to social causes. The universal yearning for equitable opportunity so that every human being shall have a chance to actualize the creative potentialities latent in him.

c. The conscious use of education as a means of eliciting the full personality of the child and of inculcating in him a respect for the personality in others.

With the foregoing analysis in mind I formulated the problem to be discussed by the Seminar, as follows:

We believe that human life viewed collectively and individually to be worthwhile is contingent upon the existence of standards or measures of right and wrong. We therefore view with concern the prevalence of

individualism consequent upon the breakdown of traditional standards and are anxious to identify the standards that are emerging and to discover their sanctions or ground of validation.

Having thought through the problem beforehand I was anxious to forestall the aimlessness which I was sure would characterize the first part of the discussion. I therefore did not hesitate to be more forward than I usually am with people I am not acquainted with and immediately after the chairman, Dr. F. Dean McClusky - who, by the way, was quite incompetent for the task - made his opening remarks, I proposed that we organize our discussion around the problem stated above. The suggestion was adopted more, I believe, because there wqs not counter suggestion on hand than because of the recognition of the intrinsic meaning of the problem or merit of the suggestion. The discussion did not proceed far before I had to make a further contribution with regard to the procedure in the analysis of the case study material which the contributors had sent in.

Two sessions of the Seminar took place on Wednesday, May 4, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, and a third session took place on Thursday morning. The last among the listeners to ask questions or raise objections in the afternoon session was Dr. Morgenstern of NUC who took exception to my emphasis upon personality. He showed that he possessed very little understanding of the problem under discussion.

For the next morning I came prepared with the following definition of personality:

Personality is the totality of one's being both actual and potential. That totality is not only conditioned but also conditions. It is not only the effect of action but initiates action. Personality is that inalienable untransferable element of singularity which renders an individual an unrepeated and unrepeatable entity in the entire universe, that selfhood whose essence it is to grow by assimilating an ever

widening area of human experience, and by continually enlarging its sympathetic appreciation of what goes on in other selves.

The criterion of the normal functioning of the various relationships between the individual and his environment is the question: To what extent does the relationship make for the enhancement of personality?

1. Sex relationship; 2. youth adult relationship; 3. economic relationship; 4. politica - citizen state relationship; 5. religious - individual cosmos relationship.

The question we should ask in religion is: Is God conceived in such a way as to make for the enhancement of personality? In fact we might define God (as he should be conceived) as that aspect of reality which in the individual human being makes for the enhancement of personality.

* * *

Wednesday, May 18, 1932

I forgot to mention that on Tuesday, May 3 I addressed the Parent-Teachers' Association of the Center Academy of Brooklyn. I did it mainly because Judith teaches in that school. When I first received the invitation to speak before that Association I wrote in reply that I would like to get some specific questions which the parents would want me to discuss. In her letter of April 25, Mrs. Emily M. Rosenstein, Chairman of the Parents' Education Committee stated "I have asked several parents for questions they would like you to touch upon. The question uppermost in the mothers' minds seemed to be: IN sending our children to a Jewish school are we not giving them a one-sided education and so not fitting them for life in the mixed world in which they must live?" Another question troubling some is: How can we reconcile giving a Jewish education to our children in school and maintaining an unorthodox home?

I organized my address around these two questions. It is evident that the parents who send their children to that school, though

mostly of the class of Jews who are identified with congregations like mine and Israel Levinthal's do so not because but despite of the fact that the children aregiven their Jewish training together with their general training.

The convention of the Rabbinical Assembly took place this year almost two months ahead of time and in this city instead of at one of the summer resorts. The reason for the change was given out as being the fact that the proximity to the convention of the United Synagogue would enable more members of the Assembly to attend both conventions than could attend were the two conventions far apart. The members of this year's graduating class have expressed the suspicion that the change in time was due mainly to the desire on the part of the "Old Guard" (Finkelstein et al) to prevent them from voting since they would still be undergraduates at the time of the convention. The reason Finkelstein thought it essential to keep the graduating students (of whom there would have been about 16 or 17) from voting was that he had heard that they had conspired to vote me into the presidency of the Rabbinical Assembly. I wonder whether there is any ground for that suspicion. It is typical, however, of the attitude of most of the students toward Finkelstein. They like him but they don't trust him.

The opening meeting took place on Tuesday evening, May 10. I came too late to hear Adler's talk but from the few sentences quoted in the Jewish Daily Bulletin I could gather that he had gotten wind of the proposed June conference and he rapped it by gentle innuendo. When Mayor Walker was about to speak I walked out of the room. It was Alexander Basel who was responsible for inviting that scamp against the advice of Adler.

Wednesday afternoon Levinthal delivered his presidential message. One passage in it was devoted to an attack against the point I made in a

brief article that appeared recently in Opinion to the effect that the rabbi ought to be well grounded in the knowledge of the social sciences. His maggidic pilpulism with a dash of Masliansky's outdated oratory always jars on my nerves and this time worse than ever. In the evening there was a banquet with its usual rosters of boring speeches. Adler stayed away, presumably because Israel Goldstein had to make an appeal for the Adler Testimonial Fund. The Trustees of the Seminary who started it had hoped to raise $30,000. So far only about $10,000 has come in. Ochs of the Times sent in $50.00. My letter to about 26 of the members of the SAJ broughtin only $200.00. When Sol Stroock was called upon he repeated his usual banalities and did not even omit his usual laprous linguae of calling the Seminary "the cemetery." He spoke in grandeloquent fashion of those who gave their lives to "the cemetery." The piece de resistance was Prof. Ginzberg's speech. His opening remarks on these occasions are invariably the same -- some rather dull jokes about speaking before or after a banquet and about his interest in the Talmud. When he was through with his introduction he launched forth into a tirade against the presumption of some people who dare to suggest that Judaism is in need of reconstruction. Judaism, he maintained, is a growth and cannot be changed at will. He spoke in this vein for a long while and at times rose to heights of denunciation in the same way as he did a year ago last Hannukah. Elias Solomon, who spoke after Ginzberg, lauded Ginzberg's speech as extremely profound and inspiring and as having made the banquet worth while.

* * *

Thursday, May 19, 1932

The occasion which Ginzberg took as a text for his tirade was the fact that this year happens to be the centernnary of Zing's Gottesdienstliche Vortrage. The various lessons he claimed to have learned from that work pointed to the conclusion that the attempt to reconstruct Judaism was nothing less than absurd and arrogant. In the course of his

talk he gave utterance to the following "profound truths:" "It is against the law of nature to create something new." "Judaism is not a construction but a growth." "You cannot find a new center of gravity. You must hold to the God of Israel if you want to hold to the Israel of God. If you want to hold on to the God of the Bible you must hold on to the Bible of God." This last was said about two minutes after he spoke in high praise of Zimz as "the foremost among the Jewish higher critics of the Bible and who in his radicalism did not merely parrot phrases of German professors." Then came a good deal of sophistry about Philo vs. Maimonides, in the course of which he cried out "What does philosophy mean, anyhow? Who bothers about it?" Such was the farrage of half-truths and demogagy by which G. tried to confute my humble efforts to get our people to realize and reckon with the implications of modernism.

I should have mentioned that Levinthal's address was followed by a paper on the Synagogue Center by Harry L. Glucksman, Executive Director of the Welfare Board. I was very happy to hear him give me credit for having been the first to formulate the philosophy of the Jewish Center movement. He pointed out that the main reason for the failure of the Synagogue centers to function as a means of strengthening the synagogue or Jewish life was neither the laymen who built them nor the rabbis who conducted their activities took the trouble to put that philosophy into effect. This is indeed what I myself say in the article which appeared several weeks ago in Opinion.

On Thursday morning I read my paper on "The Place of Dogma in Judaism" (see p.) I prefaced the reading of it with some remarks about throwing humility to thewinds when truth was at stake. The book of Job, I said, was to me the magna charta of the Jews' right to think and

question. I then alluded to the fact that I had been listening patiently to the innuendos (P.260) attacking the conception of Judaism I have had occasion to give expression to. I was willing to learn from Prof. Ginzberg. I didn't mind being lectured to. But I did object to being lectured at.

I interspersed the reading of my paper with remarks directed against the main points Ginzberg had made at the banquet the night before. I held forth for an hour and a half. The auditorium of the Teachers Institute was crowded. Prof. Ginzberg and Marx were in the audience. When I got through I was given a rousing ovation. I was followed by Rabbis Israel M. Goldman of Providence and Samuel Rosenblatt of Baltimore who read their criticisms of my paper, copies of which had been sent to them. After lunch the discussion on my paper was resumed. R. Charles I. Hoffman objected to my entire approach practically on the same groundsas Ginzberg had done the night before. The discussion continued in rather dull fashion until Ginzberg asked for the floor. Those present croweded to the front so as to hear what he had to say, because he speaks quite indistinctly and inaudibly. For about forty minutes he kept up his barrage. But there was nothing new in all that he had to say. I spoke in rebuttal for over half an hour. I kept the discussion on a high plane by being duly deferential to Ginzberg but taking issue with him in the spirit of a disciple who takes exception to some of the ideas expressed by his master. By making these prefatory remarks I poured oil as it were on the troubled waters. I then proceeded to state wherein I ventured to differ from G. both in point of fact and in point of interpretation. The members of the Assembly were very happy that I spoke in that vein and G himself came over afterwards to congratule me on Judtth's engagement.

The most exciting part of the convention came Thursday night. The majority of the men had to leave Friday morning. The session scheduled for that time was therefore held on Thursday night. Even then very few had remained. The most important matter brought up at the closing session is the election which is usually steamrollered in regular political fashion. The Nominations Committee hands in its ticket and all the nominees are elected. This time there was a break with that tradition. Ira Eisenstein had been agitating for some time among the younger men that I should be elected to the presidency. A few days before the convention he and Boxer went to see Finkelstein and to tell him of their purpose to push my candidacy. When Finkelstein heard that they wanted me to be nominated he let loose in angry protest against them for daring to suggest such a preposterous idea. From that moment on he was trying to maneouver the nominations so as to prevent the possibility of my running for the presidency. He at once told Levinthal about it who appointed on the nominating committee mostly those who were known as my opponents with Louis Epstein as chairman. At F's suggestion apparently Boxer was also included in the committee so as to keep him from agitating for me on the floor of the convention. Finkelstein was busy instructing the nominating committee. Eisenstein, Laugh and Israel M. Goldman came before the committee and brought with them 23 signatures of men who petitioned that I be nominated. At this the committee waxed indignant and they worked up Morris Levine into an attitude of resentment against the electioneering methods to which my friends dared to stoop. Finally the ticket which the committee handed in was as follows: Jacob Kohn of Los Angeles, President; Max D. Klein of Philadelphia, vice president. This was a trick on the face of it to put Klein in office, because it would be impossible for Kohn to function as president. As soon as the ticket was presented the wrangling began. Schoenfel nominated me from the floor. I was then asked to leave the room and for over an hour there was violent

debate whether I was the right man for the presidency. Finkelstein fought hard against my election and used every possible argument to defeat me. When the vote was taken I won by a majority of three, the vote being 16 for me and 13 for Kohn. The students of the Seminary who were eager to see me elected had also to leave the room while the debate and voting went on. They stood in the lobby awaiting the result When it was announced that I won they raised a shout that was heard all over the place.

I must say that Eisenstein began well in his efforts to have me elected but he did not show very much political ability when it came to seeing the thing through. In fact after his conference with the nominations committee he was sure I stood no chance of being elected. On Thursday evening just beforethe question of nominations was to come up Elias Margolis came up to me and took me aside to ask me whether I really wanted to run against Kohn. I answered in the affirmative. In that case he said, he will run for the vice presidency. He at once passed the word to some of my friends and that is how I came to be elected.

The accompanying editorial in the Jewish Morning Journal explains why F fought so hard against me. He is sure that my election will give the Yeshiba crowd a weapon with which to fight the Seminary and the Seminary graduates. While I too hate to contemplate the possible harm it might do some of the men I cannot help being satisfied that my election will begin to put an end to the policy (which Finkelstein, Epstein et al are responsible for) of having the Seminary sail under the Orthodox flag.

This tendancy to regard misrepresentation and sailing under false colors as necessary to save Jewish institutions is so deeply bred into the character of a man like F. that it breaks out even on uncalled for occasions. For example last night he and I happened to be at Mrs. Jacobs' home where Edwin Samuel was giving his concluding talk on

the problem of Arab Jewish relations. In the course of the discussion the question arose as to what should be done to deflate the Zionist propaganda of the past years and to bring it into line with the realities of the situation. Finkelstein averred that such deflation meant death to the Zionist organization. To this Samuel had to retort "You've got to speak the truth even in public. You can't fool all the people all the time."

* * *

Saturday night, May 21, 1932

On Friday May 13 Sam Cohen the executive director of the United Synagogue called me up to ask me that I should bring greetings of the Rabbinical Assembly to the convention of the United Synagogue at Atlantic City. I spent the greater part of the day on the message of greeting. Saturday night I discovered that it was inadequate, so I continued working on it while on the train to Atlantic City on Sunday morning.

From Atlantic City I went by bus to Philadelphia to attend the convention of the National Conference for Jewish Education where I was scheduled to read a paper on the Objectives of the American Jewish School of Tomorrow. The paper was listened to by a large and interested audience and was very well received. It was followed by one which Golub had worked on together with Honor. The Golub-Honor paper was based on the philosophy of education which I had developed in ~~mine~~ my address, although it had been worked out independently of it.

The audience at the convention of the United Synagogue at the time I spoke was small and measly. When I left the meeting on my way to get the bus I was followed by a certain Koppelman, the president (I believe) of R. Silverman's congregation of Hartford. "All that you said is mere platitudes" he said. "Tell us specifically how we can get the money we need for the United Synagogue." I got angry and told him that my function was merely to bring greetings and not to do what it was his business

I was extremely weary Saturday and Sunday (May 14 and 15) probably due to my hay fever. My right ear has been partially stuffed up. This is why I was not in a condition to stay over for the rest of the convention at Philadelphia as I had intended, but returned to New York on Sunday night.

On Thursday morning I presided at the first meeting of the new administration of the Executive Council of the Rabbinical Assembly. I managed to get through a lot of business between 11:00 and 1:00. Chairmen of Standing Committees were elected by the Council. The treasurer's report was rendered. Schwefel was appointed Director of placement work for the next four months, etc. This procedure presents a strong contrast with what I remember of past administrations. The standing committees of the last Council were appointed about four months ago.

The situation of the Teachers Institute and Seminary College is very precarious. In place of the $44,000 we used to be granted in the last few years for the payment of the salaries to members of the teaching staff, and $18,700 last term (half year) Adler informed me that there would be only $12,000 at my disposal for the whole of next year. It would therefore be necessary, according to him, to dismiss practically the entire staff, give up the Friedlaender Classes and the Seminary College, and not admit any new students to the Teachers Institute. He stipulated that Levine and I should continue receiving our present salaries. Adler said all this to me orally a week ago last Tuesday and wrote out the figures in a letter which I got from him a week ago Thursday. I conferred with Dinin a week ago yesterday from 1:30 to 4:00. As a result of the discussion I appointed a committee consisting of Chipkin, Dinin, Chertoff and Barh Barli to see what can be done with the small amount at our disposal so as not to dismiss any of the

instructors, if possible.

On Tuesday morning I had a long talk with Finkelstein about his opposition to my candidacy. I gathered that it was due to his fear that my election would serve as a weapon in the hands of the Yeshiva crowd in their denunciation of the Seminary graduates.

Yesterday after the meeting with the staff, Ira Eisenstein brought me the news of he meeting which had taken place last Tuesday night between representatives of the Jewish Center Board and the Board of Trustees of the SAJ with regard to merging the two institutions. The invitation came from the Center people. The understanding is that Jung would be given two years' salary and resign and thatEisenstein and I would take charge of the Center. As for the innovations worked out in the SAJ service, that we would have to give up. It was this latter condition which got Eisenstein very much worried. I made it clear to him that if the merger would be effected it would be a moral victory despite our conceding for the present their retaining their present form of service. But that under no circumstances would I consider going with them unless it was clearly stipulated in writing that I would be given full charge of the educational work and unqualified freedom to teahh and preach.

What worried Eisenstein was the fact that Klein and Abe Liebovitz who had spoken to him, were so anxious to have the merger effected that they were ready to surrender all the gains we had made in the way of rendering our service more nearly in accord with our beliefs. Neither Eisenstein nor I liked the idea of having the negotiations proceed without my being taken into the confidence of those who were conducting them. I therefore took the first opportunity I had of butting into the negotiations. Immediately after the services I got hold of Joe

Levy, Unterberg and Abe Liebovitz and told them of my apprehension from a financial point of view and urged them to be very wary. In the afternoon I went to see Joe Levy and found Rosenblatt with him. I told them that they must insist upon the removal of the clause in the Center constitution which was adopted a few years ago to the effect that the Center must be governed in the religious activities by the Shulhan Aruk and that this clause could not be repealed if three or more members objected. They promised to do that.

Last Monday night the annual meeting of the SAJ took place. The attendance was meager and the reports and speeches, one of which was made by me, were tame. Those present interpreted my remarks as being optimistic in tone and they were happy that I didn't scold them. As a matter of fact I praised the members for the fine spirit they showed in response to the various appeals for support.

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Wednesday, May 25, 1932

About ten days ago I got a letter from Rabbi Louis M. Levitsky from Wilkes Barre complaining that he had been trying to see me several times, but he somehow could not get near me. He said that I seemed to treat him coldly implying that he wanted me to be more friendly to him. I replied immediately that I would only be too glad to see him and to have a heart to heart talk with him.

He was here this evening and I had it out with him. The fact is that for the last ten years he has been living on the material he got from my lectures at the Seminary and the various articles that appeared in the SAJ Review and now he came to get some new material for teaching and preaching. He did not leave this fact to inference but stated it in clear and straightforward fashion. Being in the habit of working together with Rabbi Arzt from Scranton, he used jointly with Arzt the

the material he got from me. When I heard Levitsky tell me how much he was indebted to me I grew indignant at his and Arzt's failure ever to make the slightest mention of that fact to the authorities of the Seminary. I am sure that if they had known how much I contribute to whatever the students carry away ffom the Seminary that is of practical value to them in the ministry, I would have gotten a much fairer deal than I have.

* * *

Thursday, May 26, 1932

R. Louis Levitsky told me a Hassidic story which he had used in a sermon on prayer. The story runs that a Jew came to his "Rabbi" and asked him to pray in his behalf for sustenance. The "Rebbi" said Why don't you pray to God yourself?" "I am not good enough to have God answer my prayers," said the Jew. "In that case," answered the "Rebbi", "you are in need of something that is more important even than sustenance."

He told me another story not about a Hassidic "Rebbi" but an up to date modern Rabbi. The "hero" of this story is R. Israel Levinthal. Levinthal was invited by R. Arzt of Scranton to address his congregation. R. Arzt made quite a fuss about him in the community as the president of the Rabbinical Assembly and as an outstanding figure in the rabbinate. In the course of his stay Levinthal got to talking with the president of R. Arzt's congregation. The first question he put to the president was "Have you been paying your rabbi his regular salary?" When he was told that their rabbi's salary ~~has~~ continued the same as what it had been before the crash, Levinthal said "Why, that's remarkable! I have had to take two cuts in my salary." Not many days elapsed before R. Arzt was notified that he too would have to take a cut in his salary.

The following is about a Jewish lay leader, Louis M. Oransky of Des Moines, Ia. For a long time he had been trying hard to climb into the presidency of the Reform congregation of that city. But being a Russian Jew the German Jews, who constitute the majority of the members, gave him to understand that he was not eligible. This angered and hurt him to such an extent that he made up his mind to build a synagogue for the Conservative element with which he had been identified all his life. He finally succeeded in having a very fine structure built and the congregation took one of the Seminary graduates as a rabbi: Lewis Grossman, who told me all this was their rabbi for the last three years.

But the point of the story is he following: Recently Oransky's friends decided to express in some permanent form their appreciation of all he had done for the congregation. R. Grossman, together with a committee agreed that the most appropriate way of expressing their appreciation was to have a bronze tablet commemorating his generosity and devotion put up somewhere in the synagogue. Apparently neither the inscription nor the place of the tablet suited Oransky so he took the matter into his own hands and before long there appeared a bronze tablet in the most conspicuous place in the synagogue bearing the inscription "This synagogue is dedicated to Louis M. Oransky," etc.

About ten days ago I sent out letters to all the members of the SAJ asking them to send in contributions to the Palestine Campaign Fund. The following day Semel called me up and tried to impress me that I pursued the wrong method in sending out letters. He claimed that I should have called a meeting at my house and have invited a number of members as I did in previous years. I mentioned to him the fact that Sam Lamport tried that and had S.S. Wise up in his house in the hope of getting a large response. Yet no one showed up. Nevertheless I took

Semel's advice and immediately sent out letters for a meeting at my house tonight. The only ones that came were Ira Kaplan, Semel and Washman. The total reciepts in answer to my letter was about $450. The first Palestine campaign realized about $30,000 in the SAJ. Even two years ago I believe the SAJ contributed about $12,000. This conveys concretely the extent of the comedown in spirit and power of the SAJ during this last year or two.

In the course of the conversation with Semel I wanted to draw him out about the work of the Mayor's Kashrut Committee. Unfortunately I lost my temper at some of the remarks he made about the committee going on with its work despite opposition on the part of the Rabbinical Assembly. But incidentally he mentioned the corrupt practices of some of the Orthodox rabbis that are simply incredible. There are among them men who give a "heksher" for fifty or seventy five dollars and take no steps whatever to supervise the kashrut. One rabbi gave a "heksher" to Ward's, a well known baking company, for products in which they use lard. The wholesale butchers in many instances insist upon a certain percentage of slaughtered animals being declard kosher. Some of those so-called rabbis actually sell the (p.267) indiscriminately.

* * *

Friday, May 27, 1932

I called today a meeting of Rabbis Basil, Drob and Levinthal to consider the question of what to do about the supervision of the kashrut over which the Orthodox rabbis are trying to get the entire control. It became evident in the course of the discussion that the members of the Rabbinical Assembly who are located in New York ought to organize themselves into a New York section of the Assembly.

R. Drob mentioned the fact that his congregation had engaged Cantor Rutman in order to attract members and holiday worshippers. It will therefore be necessary for the congregation to curtail Drob's salary or send him away altogether.

R. Basel told of a discussion he had with a member of his in the early thirties who comes from a Hassidic background and has managed to keep up the Hassidic tradition in his home. The discussion turned upon the question whether Cantor Shlisky should be engaged by the congregation. R. Basel objected to him on the ground that he has had illicit relations with women and one of them gave birth to a child. The Hassidic members took exception to Basel's attitude. "In my opinion, Judaism is not a moral religion. Judaism stresses attending synagogue, eating kosher but has nothing to do with leading a moral life. Didn't David commit adultery?"

Judging by the venal actions of the Orthodox rabbis referred to on the preceding page this Hassid is not entirely wrong in what he said. There are sufficient examples in the Talmud of a low ethical standard. I just happened to read the passage in Taanit 21b where R. Nahman b. R. Hisda invites R. Nahman b. Isaac to sit alongside of him in recognition of the ingenuity (?) displayed by the latter in putting a certain question. The entire idea of making a fuss about where one sits is puerile. It is fitting for children in an elementary school, and even there it is known to have a bad influence. But the most disgusting part of the story is where R. Nahman b. Isaac insults his own father by speaking of himself as "an eminent man, the son of a less eminent man" (p.268)(. A mina the product of a half-mina.) In speaking of the ethics of the Talmud, the truth demands that an instance like the foregoing should not be hushed up.

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Saturday night, May 28, 1932

Shlomo Bardin and his wife (nee Ruth Jonas) had dinner with us last night. He is a young Palestinian who came here to study at Teachers College where he is about to get his Ph.D. His wife is the daughter of a German Jew. Until about a few years ago she had no interest whatever in Jewish life. Now she is an ardent Zionist - or rather became such long before she met Bardin due to a large extent, I believe, to the influence of Mrs. Adlerblum. He is vitally interested in developing in Palestine the idea of industrial education and he intends to establish there a school based upon this type of education.

I found the conversation with the two of them last night highly stimulating. It began with our discovering our like mindedness with reference to two facts, one was the primacy of intellectual honesty and the complete disregard of it in Jewish life, and the other the illusion that there is such a thing as Jewish education in this country. His wife's remark that I ought to break away from the synagogue Jews and concentrate instead upon the many young Jewish people who would return to Judaism if it were properly interpreted to them led me to say that there was on the whole more hope for Jewish life from Jews in whom there still functioned the momentum of the past as evidenced by their affiliation with the synagogue than from the few who had fine character and a good mind but who had become weaned away from active association with their fellow Jews. He himself brought out a good point when he said that I ought to place my emphasis upon the necessity of Jews developing a productive economy as a basis of Jewish communal life and as a practical expression of Jewish idealism.

This morning at 11:45 a special meeting of the SAJ Board of Trustees was held in the library of the SAJ to discuss the latest developments in the negotiations with the Jewish Center group. From the report that Klein rendered it appears that the Center group is not proposing a merger between the two institutions. They want to turn over their building and liabilities entirely to the SAJ. This means that they want to unburden all their indebtedness on the SAJ. Klein and Joe Levy who at first were rather enthusiastic about the idea stated that they had changed their minds, others who had not expressed themselves also spoke against assuming new responsibilities especially in view of the doubtful prospects of an enlarged income and the likelihood of both organizations losing many members. Abe Liebovitz and Jacob Levy at first spoke hotly in favor of taking over the Center, but toward the end Liebovitz cooled off. I was not going to say anything but I couldn't restrain myself. Jacob Levy's idiotic glorification of the Center building and Rosenblatt's slighting allusion to our form of service were too much for me. I said nothing about the spiritual aspect of the transfer to the Center building. I confined myself to the tremendous financial burden we would assume. My original approval, I said, was based upon the assumption that these two organizations would merge. But if the largest contributors among the Center membership are to get out altogether then I see no advantage whatever in the proposed move. It seems now that the negotiations will come to nothing.

It is impossible to break with established tradition or routine without being haunted by the consequences. Some time ago I picked up sufficient courage to flout the law which prohibits the marriage of a "Kohen" to a divorcee and I officiated for the first time in my life at the wedding of such a couple. A little while ago Mr. Scherr, the

father of the divorcee, rings me up to inform me that his daughter gave birth to a boy. He wanted to know whether it was necessary to celebrate (p.270) . I told him that I consider both the "Kehunah" and the practice of redeeming the first born as obsolete. For all I know this may reach the ears of my Orthodox colleagues. I shall then be in for more argument and more trouble. But, of course, I have to be prepared for that kind of attack. The worst of it is that the attack never materializes, because of the paralyzing apathy in our ranks.

The date of the conference for the Reconstruction is rapidly drawing near and I am still struggling with the task of writing out my address for that occasion. I can only pray to God that He grant me the clarity of thought and the power of expression to formulate a message that will arouse some of the more earnest Jews in this country to stem the tide of assimilation and to build a strong dyke of Jewish association and idealism.

From the time that Jewish life has been drawn into the current of modern civilization no individual or group has made any sustained effort to explore the far reaching consequences which were bound to follow from the ending of the/long age isolation of the Jewish people. Before the emancipation Jewish life was uniform in belief, practice and organization and envisaged by every Jew in its totality as destined to attain a goal which he sincerely yearned after and prayed for in common with every other Jew.

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Saturday night, June 4, 1932

Last Thursday night I attended the "Siyum Ha'zman" of the Friedlaender Classes. I am afraid that unless a miracle happens that may prove to be the last Siyum for a time at least. As on previous years I was disappointed in the number of students present. There

were however a few alumni and guests who helped to fill the dining room of the Seminary cafeteria. Mrs. Hamburger, the president of the Ivriah who seems to have succeeded in arousing in a number of women an interest in Jewish education,,sat alongside of me and I tried to persuade her that the problem of the Jewish adolescent boys and girls should be given priority over every other in Jewish education. It certainly should take precedence over the kindergarten work for which she is gathering a fund which by now amounts to $5000.

Chipkin, who is mainly responsible for keeping the classes alive, had just come from a grilling interview he had had with a committee of the local Federation. They tried very hard to get him to consent to the practical elimination from the budget of the allotment for the Jewish education. They maintained that bread came first. Education was a luxury. He insisted that the Federation should supply bread plus education to those who were unable to obtain it without the aid of Federation.

Among the guests were the members of the winning team of American Jews and one Jewess who took part in the Maccabeiad at Tel Aviv recently. The young woman and two of the young men were called upon to speak. What the young woman said was not so bad. But one of the men who spoke gave expression to crudities which jarred every one present. I grew very restive as the hour was getting late. Finally Chipkin gave a brief and spirited address and he then called upon me. I spoke vigorously and effectively. I drew on the sermon I expect to deliver on Shabuot and concluded with an allusion to the fact that the element of (p.271) is part of our psychology. No sooner Abraham entered the land "And there was a famine in the land" I expressed the hope that we too will prove that we possess the stamina to meet the present crisis.

At the SAJ services today I addressed Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Klein whose younger son Billy became Bar Mizvah. I explained my departure from the customary practice of addressing the boy on the ground that the change in the circumstances of Jewish life make it necessary to address meself on this occasion to the parents. The parents can no longer say as they did in the past when their child became Bar Mitzvah (p.272) because 1) they have to exert themselves after their child's Bar Mizvah celebration to knit him into Jewish associated life; 2) they have to provide him with instruction in Jewish knowledge and 3) they have to help him acquire an understandable conception of God. None of these requirements obtained in the past.

Harry Rubinsky who is a member of the SAJ though he lives on the East side of the Park and is a member of long standing in Orach Chayim of which congregation Moses Hyamson is the rabbi. He is a "Kohen" who takes his status quite seriously, especially because he performs the rite of blessing the worshippers at the holiday services. When I came home this morning from services he called me up to ask me what he should do in the following predicament in which he found himself: His father-in-law who had been living with him and his family died this morning. He hated the idea of having to stay away from the house till after the funeral. His wife who is otherwise quite orthodox, felt the same way about it. He wanted to get my opinion which he knew would be a liberal one in order, as he put it, "to have somebody to lean on as it were." I did not disappoint him and told him that I regarded the "Kehuvah" as an obsolete instution and he therefore could disregard the ritual laws associated with that status. He wanted me to tell him that these laws were not based on a biblical ordinance. I could not comply with his wish; nevertheless I told him he should have the courage to disregard them.

In rending the treatise of Taanit today I came across what I regard as a misinterpretation of the text. The text reads (p.272)

This text in the Jewish classics is an improvement on that ( ) given in the usual editions of the Talmud. I believe, however, that the word was introduced by someone who followed the usual misinterpretation which is repeated by Molter in his English translation. In my opinion is a reference to who was the son of Elkanah who is called in the Bible . The meaning of the passage therefore is: R. Nahman said: "If Samuel had sipped a bowlful of porridge the rain would nevertheless have come." The powers which Samuel possessed of bringing on rain is referred in a similar connection in the same treatise on folio .

Last night I had an interesting conversation with a certain Rothkowitz who is a teacher of art in the Center Academy where Judith teaches. One of the thoughts I came upon in the course of the discussion was that the Jews discovered the cosmos (the world as a unit) and the Greeks discovered man (as the maker of the thought world in which he moves). Fosdick's attempt to make out a case for Christianity as the discoverer of human personality is a tour de force. and as the measuring of all things

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Monday, June 6, 1932

Yesterday I went through the annual ordeal of the Seminary graduation exercises. The only redeeming feature was that they took place on the campus of the Seminary instead of in the hired halls where they used to take place formerly. The piece de resistance was a three quarter of an hour harangue by that pompous careerist, Israel

Goldstein on the importance of the rabbi believing in the existence of God. In dramatic fashion he thundered "He may be a social worker, he may be a teacher of Hebrew, but he dare not be a rabbi." The whole thing was a tirade against Solomon Goldman whom A. H. Silver makes it his business to denounce as the atheist rabbi. Of course the people applauded Goldstein's oration which he bellowed with all the cocksureness of a cheap demagogue.

Herman Abramowitz of Montreal was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity and Enelow the DHL. The latter fully deserved the honor because he has encouraged scholarly work, helped to get the money for the chair in Jewish history and literature in Columbia and has published a critical text of the Menorat Ha Maaor. But as for Abramowitz who is little more than a stuffed shirt there was not much zeal displayed at the Faculty meeting when Adler suggested that he be awarded an honorary degree. In fact Adler's suggestion was received so coldly that it was dropped for a time. But he brought it up again intimating very broadly that he hoped to use that honor as bait for money from Montreal. He told the story of a former president of Yale University who unfolded to his board of trustees a five million dollar plan to enlarge the university. When they asked him how he expected to get the money, he answered "By degrees."

Last night the Alumni of the Teachers Institute had a dinner and dance. The alumni were very poorly represented. It was a gruelling task for me to deliver a speech on the present status of the Institute. Not even the $350 check I was handed completing the $1000 raised by the Alumni afforded me much joy. They are somehow very unfortunate in their chairmen. Eisenberg lowered the tone of the evening by his silly introductions. Nor do I expect anything better of his successor, Ohlbaum. They may be well meaning, but they are very crude. Every time they open their mouth in public they cheapen the cause they espouse.

There appeared in last week's issue of the "Hadoar" an article by Kalman Whiteman in which he takes issue with what he alleges to be my views about religion and God. He is a very simple minded fellow who has a very hazy journalistic notion of what it's all about. What he says is a tangle of contradictions and misunderstandings. Needless to say, I am very much irritated by the article. I would give anything if I had the time to write an answer to it. With my lack of fluency in writing Hebrew I would need the better part of a whole day to do justice to the subject. But unfortunately I am distracted by a multitude of details in the arrangement for meetings and the attendance of them. And even if I were free, I would begrudge the time spent on a fragmentary effort when I ought to be perfecting the larger pieces of work I have been engaged in all the seyears.

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Thursday, June 16, 1932

This has been a very busy week for me. I was on the go from one meeting to another. On Monday the 13th I presided at the second meeting of the Executive Council of the Rabbinic Assembly. R. Basel took me to task for the letter I had sent to "Opinion" in answer to Wise's attack on the Rabbinical Assembly. He was joined in by Simon Greenberg of Philadelphia. The latter had shown himself unfriendly to me right along and especially when he was a member of the Nominations Committee at the last convention of the Rabbinical Assembly. I pleaded guilty to the charges made against me by Basel and Greenberg and was even willing to have the Executive go on record as rebuking me for that letter. But the other members of the Executive saw that the matter had gone far enough and moved to discontinue the discussion at that point.

I was chagrined at the way in which Morris Levine chimed in with everything that Israel Goldstein said, and in general seemed to take the reactionary side of every question that was brought up.

I don't know why I went out of my way to take Greenberg to task for being unfriendly to me and why I tried so hard to win him over to my side. I spent several hours with him to prove to him that he had me all wrong in his notion of my theology. I took lunch with him, walked with him all the way to my house, took him upstairs and read to him portions from the book on Judaism as a Civilization. In the course of the conversation with him I learned the reason for his antagonism to me. Several years ago when I tried to organize a conference similar to the one I am organizing now I did not invite him to take part in it. I did not think he would be in sympathy with the aims of that conference. I had come to that conclusion from the controversy he had carried on with me in the SAJ Review. When he asked me why I hadn't invited him I told him that I classed him with R. Charles I. Hoffman. He hasn't forgiven me since. If I had any political sense I should have known that by deliberately identifying him as an opponent I only intensified his opposition.

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Saturday night, June 18, 1932

The two questions which occupied the greater part of the time spent by the Executive Council were: The advisability of having the Rabbinical Assembly register its approval of the growing movement to repeal the 18th amendment, and the resolution which I. Levinthal had formulated at my suggestion urging the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Congress and the Bnai Birth to get together on the question whether or not a Jewish world congress should be summoned. The debate on the first question dragged on for a long time. It revealed the different characters of the men. I. Goldstein and Landesman, e.g. who belong to the "bandwagon," type argued that before the present time when there is a serious attempt being made to repeal the 18th amendment to pass any resolutions on the subject would have been like a voice

crying in the wilderness. Others like Rosenthal, Finkelstein (this time he acted sensibly) said that to pass such resolutions would smack of opportunism. I tried to oppose the passing of any resolutions as confirming the general charge against the clergy of always seconding an motion but never taking the initiative. It was finally decided to leave the matter in the hands of a committee.

Levinthal's resolution elicited such emendation from Goldstein and Finkelstein as weakened its effect. Finkelstein was prompted mainly by the desire to support Adler who is president of the American Jewish Committee in his fight against Wise. I managed however to secure the insertion of a phrase which counteracted their emendations. The resolution appeared this morning in the Jewish Daily Bulletin. Coming on top of Adler's denunciation of Wise which appeared in the press yesterday, it has the salutary effect of proving that we are not all Adler's "yes-men."

I had all along felt that it was essential for the members of the Rabbinical Assembly who are located in the Metropolitan area to get together often to discuss the many problems they have in common. The kashrut question happens to be in the forefront of interest just now in view of the attempt being made by the Orthodox rabbis to get control of the income from kashrut. Of course there are many more vital problems which our men in this city ought to tackle as a body. I therefore took the initiative in organizing a New York Section of the R.A. by sending out a call for an organization meeting and preparing a short program which would focus attention upon the purposes that might be furthered through collective action on our part. More than fifty men attended the meeting which took place last Thursday at 11:00 A.M. at the Social Room of the Unterberg Building. I had worked out a slate which was brought in by Nominating Committee. A. Basel was elected

chairman. I hope he will make good. Yesterday I had to advise him whom to put on the Executive Committee of seven. He accepted my suggestions.

Prof. Davidson, his wife and their daughter Gladys called on us last Wednesday in honor of Judith's wedding which is to take place a week from tomorrow. They brought along very beautiful little gifts for her. While the women were conversing about their affairs, Davidson and I discussed religion and ritual. I showed him my amended text of Kol Nidre which he heartily disapproved of. He liked my sermon on "Israel Proclaims Its Nationhood" which I delivered last Shabuot. What pleased him most was the interpretation of the passage in Taanit 246b (see p.347 this ms.)

I was very much hurt and humiliated yesterday at the meeting of the Teachers Institute Faculty when Basle assailed me for consenting to be included together with Rabbi Thomas Levine in the exception made in our favor in the Teachers Institute budget for next year. According to that arrangement our salaries were to remain unaffected while for the rest of the men there remained a mere pittance. The fact that Levine and I volunteered to take another cut of 15% in addition to the cut we took last January did not appease our colleagues on the faculty. What hurt me was the fact that I felt they were perfectly right. I mentioned the fact to Lena in my talk with her last night, but so far she has not expressed her reaction one way or the other. Not long ago we went over our home budget and found that we could not get along on less than $6000 from the Seminary. But from the standpoint of absolute justice this is a very poor argument when others on the staff have to be reduced to starvation wages as a consequence of my insisting that I need that amount to live on. When I realize the wide gap between my aspiration and my actions I feel morally unclean. That is the price we pay for

belonging to our families more than we do to ourselves.

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Thursday, July 14, 1932-Friday, July 15, 1932

I do not know why I find it so difficult to record in this Journal matters pertaining to my wife and children. Is it because I take them for granted as part of the normal course of domestic life, or because I find it difficult to keep the proper balance between appearing sentimental and appearing cold? Neither reason, however, accounts for my failure to record Judith's wedding which took place on Sunday, June 26th. It came at atime when I had to give every hour at my disposal to the course of lectures I was preparing for the Seminary graduates.

Judith was married to Albert A. Addelston with whom she had been keeping company for almost three years. The remarkable feature about this wooing is that in spite of the long period it lasted it ban smoothly and placidly. They seem to be ideally mated, both are young, aspiring, high-minded and co-ordinated in their intellectual and esthetic interests and abilities.

I realize how stiff and humorless the foreging paragraph is. It reads like part of a character certificate. That is just what I am always afraid of when I try to write about my domestic life. I somehow can't unlimber. I shall let it go at that, however.

The wedding took place at my house. I officiated. If it weren't for my inhibitions which I referred to above I would give a detailed description of what it meant for me to officiate at the wedding of my first child. I remember having picked up this Journal that day with the expectation of writing out some of the thouts that were struggling for expression, but I was too agitated to formulate a single sentence. Thank God, the ceremony, the collation, the couple's honeymoon trip and return, the renting and furnishing of their apartment came off happily without more than the requisite amount of planning and effort. Even the Kiddush which took place the Sabbath preceding

in honor of the wedding was a tremendous success. There happend to be a Bar Mizvah that Sabbath at the synagogue. Under ordinary circumstances this might have caused a terrible upset in arrangements, because it would have meant that the Hatan would not be able to read the Maftir. Fortunately Al is an old hand at reading the Torah. I suggested therefore that he read the last portion of the Torah instead of the Haftarah which properly belonged to the Bar Mizvah. Al read his portion in masterly fashion and made everybody happy.

The conference for the Reconstruction of Jewish Life which was to have taken place June 28-29 at Long Branch and for which preparation had been going on since February, had to be called off, because Dushkin who was chairman of the arrangements committee found that he had to remain in Chicago, Monday, June 27 to prevent the Budget Committee of the Chicago Federation from cutting out the allotment for Jewish Education. Many of those whom we counted on to take part in the program were prevented from attending. Although I had all the publicity material sent out and an article which I had written for Opinion was just going to press, I acted on Dushkin's telegram which I received Monday, June 20 and called off the conference. Although I felt considerably disappointed at this outcome I followed his suggestion of calling a preliminary conference in this city on Tuesday, June 28. The preliminary conference was attended by the following: Louis I. Newman, Jacob Grossman, Arthur Neulander, Albert Gordon (of Minneapolis), Solomon Goldman, Max Raisin, Jacob Raisin, Eugene Kohn, Israel Goldman (of Providence) Jacob Golub, Sam Dinin, Gamoran, Parzen, Gordis, Edidin, Chas. Cowen Fishel (of Arverne), Ira Eisenstein, Henry M. Rosenthal, Simon Greenberg (of Philadelphia,)Moss (president of the United Synagogue), Jelline (a friend of Jacob Grossman), Slawson and S.S.Wise had expected to attend but were prevented the last minute.

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Sunday, July 17, 1932

Wise called me up the next day to tell me how sorry he was he couldn't come. His son-in-law was expected to pass away any moment and his daughter in law was critically ill. That man certainly has his troubles. The controversy with Cyrus Adler is no source of pleasure either. And yet he takes time off to want to come to a conference which can have no immediate practical outcome.

The discussion in which the majority of those present participated brought out the fact that the most important problem for the regular conference to take up was the question of implementing the ideology expressed in the Tentative Platform. As for the platform itself, it was also apparent that there was not the unanimity about it that I had anticipated.

Last Thursday night (July 14) Leo L. Honor and Jacob Gold came to my house, at my request, to discuss the next step to be taken. The three of us got much further than if we had many others with us. We decided to change the name of the council to Council for the Advancement of American-Hewish Life, to boil the Platform down to a statement of the mimimum that will be acceptable to most of those who had been invited, and to hold the conference in Cleveland immediately before the Central Conference of American Rabbis will hold theirs, which will be about the middle of November.

On Monday June 27 a number of Teachers Institute alumni, a few rabbis and three members of the TI faculty (Levine, Chertoff and Dinin) met at my call at Trotzky's restaurant on W. 35 St. to discuss plans for working up a supporting membership for the TI. I am doubtful whether anything will come out of that meeting.

On Thursday, June 30 I officiated that the Bnai Jeshurun Temple at the wedding of Leon Munchin to Harriet Gewirtz together with Rabbis Israel Goldstein and Elias Margolis. The Munchins have been identified with the SAJ since its inception. For their sake I consented to officiate with IG much as I dislike him and his ways. Possibly the deisre not to start a rumpus by refusing was at the bottom of my acceptance.

For some time the Rabbinical Assembly has been talking about organizing courses for the graduates. Originally the idea was to get the Seminary Faculty to cooperate. In view, however, of the general slump in spirit and finances the Seminary Faculty was in no mood to cooperate. Finally Finkelstein and I formulated a tentative program of courses. This was sent with a letter to the graduates asking them to indicate which courses they wanted and the dates they preferred for taking those courses. Epstein and Finkelstein were on the tentative program but when it came to final arrangements they changed their minds. In that program I had myself scheduled to give a course in supplementary prayers. Of all the things I could profitably give the men that was the one I was least able to give and one that would have entailed the greatest hardship for me. Why then did I suggest it? First because there is a real need for supplementary prayers in our services which at present are dreary and monotonous for want of anything spiritually stimulating. And secondly, because I was afraid of giving the one course I had my mind set on, namely, the one dealing with the development of the Jewish religion.

Fortunately that inhibition was broken down through a request which I received from Rabbi Levitsky of Wilkes Barre. He came to see me just about the time the summer course was in the process of organization. For some reason wehad not been as friendly with each other

as we should have been. I was therefore very glad when about a month ago I got a letter from him saying that he had been trying in vain to reach me and asking for an appointment. Crowded as my time was then I made it my business to ask him to spend an entire evening with me. He explained in the course of the conversation that he had been making use for the last ten years of the material he had gotten fromme at the Seminary but now he found himself in need of new material. I was both pleased and chagrined when I heard this from him; pleased at realizing the practical value of the courses that I was giving at the Seminary and chagrined that the Seminary authorities fail to appreciate the fact. I took Levitsky to task right there and then for never intimating to Adler or the other members of the Faculty whom he sees occasionally to what extent my courses have been helpful to him. He admitted he had been negligent and thoughtless and promised to make good his neglect.

It then occurred to me that instead of giving the course on the writing of supplementary prayers, I might give the course on the development of the Jewish Religion which the graduates could use as aguide in some of their work with adult groups. This course would provide the kind of material Levitsky wanted. There was no doubt other men who would benefit equally by it. I at once notified Finkelstein of the change, and a sufficiently large number of men replied they would take it.

I began the course on Tuesday, July 5 and completed it on Friday, July 15. Although there were only nine lectures altogether I gave the men such copious outlines that they will have enough material for at least two years' courses with adult groups. The average attendance was 28.

No less pleased than I was with my own courses was I with the courses given by Rabbis Levitsky and Arzt on the practical aspects of the rabbinical work in the synagogue and religious school. I attended the lectures given by both of them. They not only gave a number of very wise practical suggestions but they also imparted a fine sense of duty and idealism and evinced a genuine enthusiasm for the rabbinate. Some of those who spoke up responded in the same spirit. This was a new experience for me. I had always been used to hearing the rabbis bewail their lot. Here were men actually fulfilling themselves through the rabbinic calling. This alone was worth to me all the effort I put into the summer courses. For once I was convinced that by helping to train men for the ministry I was not adding to the sum of human misery. The ministry does offer genuine opportunities for achievement and happiness.

I wish I had had the courage to refuse the many invitations to deliver addresses on various occasions. They distract me from what I should have liked to make the opus magnum of my life, a continuous account of the development of the Jewish religion from the very beginning down to our own day. The few books on the beginnings of the Jewish religion are written by Christians who can have no interest in the Jewish religion except as it has a bearing on Christianity. The most interesting thing about the Jews is undoubtedly their religion. Of that there is nothing that approaches a continuous and scientific account.

I believe that I have arrived at a definition of religion which promises to prove more helpful than any of the definitions I know of in identifying and organizing the facts which pertain to the most diverse religious phenomena. I formulated this definition while I was preparing the course of lectures for the summer course I just

concluded. It reads as follows: Religion is the process of creative self-adjustment, ideational, emotional and conative with which we react to those aspects of our environment which we regard rightly or wrongly both as determinative of our life and wellbeing and as being beyond our control. Accordingly the God-idea is the ideational element of that process of creative self-adjustment. Ethics is the conative element. Those who stress ethics as the essential element of religion imply that if we want to adjust ourselves successfully and creatively to that aspect of reality which is beyond our control we must act ethically toward one another. The canonical prophets would have said that by acting ethically we would be obeying God and would earn the reward of such obedience. If, however, the term "God" is to be deanthropomprphised and made to signify that in the world which makes life worthwhile the function of ethical conduct would have to consist in qualifying us to live happily in a world which is overwhelmingly beyond our control.

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Thursday, July 28, 1932

Rabbi Sam Cohen, the executive director of the United Synagogue came to the last meeting of the Executive Council of the Rabbinical Assembly with the proposition that the committee on Education and the Committee on Social Justice and perhaps one or two similar committees be formed jointly by the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue. That, he suggested, would avoid duplication and possible conflicts. But Sam Cohen is very unpopular with most of the men on the Executive Council and they cannot listen to him without being prejudiced against any suggestion coming from him. He sensed the opposition from the manner in which they reacted to what he said. Refusing, however, to give up his idea about the committees, he called me up and had Moss the president of the United Synagogue, write to me,

to arrange an appointment to discuss the matter with me. Neither he nor Moss indicated what we were to discuss, but I imagined that it would be the organization of the committees. Instead of having them come to me I preferred to go to Allenhurst where Moss was staying.

Sam Cohen met me and Lena on the Sandy Hook boat yesterday morning at 9:00. He and I talked most of the time about some of the prospective rabbinical positions and the best men available for them. When we arrived at Allenhurst Moss met us at the station and all of us walked over to his house which was about two blocks away. We were no sooner seated on the porch than Moss referred to the preliminary conference of the Reconstruction, etc. which he had attended. This gave me an opportunity to set him right with regard to the function of the contemplated council for he Reconstruction, etc. because when he was at the preliminary conference he made a suggestion which indicated that he misconceived the entire purpose of the proposed organization. His suggestion then was that the Council should take up the question of religious observances and formulate some guiding principles as to which observances to keep and which to abrogate. I therefore thought that since he broached the subject of the preliminary conference this was an excellent opportunity to have Sam Cohen get a clear explanation of my intentions concerning the proposed organization would do. This might prevent him from misrepresenting it, which he is very liable to do because he is so jealous of his position at the United Synagogue that he is inclined to view the proposed organization as a rival of the United Synagogue.

I pointed out to Moss that the main function of the Council for the Reconstruction would be to counteract the assimilationist tendencies among the Jews who were identified with Jewish institutions, religious educational and philanthropic by promulgating the idea that of Jewish life was more inclusive than Jewish religion. At the same

time I maintained that a religionless Jewish life is just as unlikely to survive as a Jewish life which is identified with religion only. I was glad to see that Moss got the point and realized that he had misconceived the function of the Council for the Reconstruction.

Sam Cohen then broached the matter which was the main purpose of our coming together. I raised no objections to his proposal. While I made no promise that I would bring the matter up at our next session of the Executive Council of the Rabbinical Assembly they probably assumed that I would. I intend to do so, however, because I believe it is the best interest of both organizations to have them appoint some of the committees jointly.

Moss then raised the question: What can the United Synagogue and the RA do to meet the problem he had raised at the preliminary conference? I pointed out to him that both organizations were composed of two radically different elements and that the desire on the part of everybody to keep together was the cause of their avoiding controversial issues that might cause a rift in both organizations. I mentioned by name Adler, Ginzberg, Louis Epstein, Drob, Finkelstein, Charles I. Hoffman and one or two more who would obstruct any attempt to adjust the religious observances to present day conditions. Moss, however, refused to be put off and kept on insisting that we must not allow ourselves to be hamstrung or intimidated (he did not use these terms but he meant them) by these men. Sam Cohen and I then suggested that the United Synagogue appoint a committee to look into the question and call upon the RA to do likewise and that the two committees work jointly on the project of arriving at some modus vivendi on the question of the religious observances.

That was just what I had been hoping for all these years. Perhaps the redemption to these two organizations which have been spiritually stagnat will come through this man Moss.

On the way back I met on the boat Dobsevage the former secretary of the Jewish Publication Society. I believe that he did some crooked work while secretary and was dismissed. In his conversation with me he spoke with considerable hatred about Adler, whom he nicknamed (p. 285) (Cyrus) Adler. He mentioned what Schechter had once said to him, "Dob, don't ever try to discuss ideas with Sulzberger (the late Judge Sulz.) and Adler." The ideas referred to had a socialist taint, and he was probably afraid the Dobsevage would lose his job, if he mentioned them to Sulzberger or Adler.

Dobsevage talked also about the late Prof. Max Margolis whom he described as a moral coward. Margolis hated Adler with all his heart yet as soon as Adler would come into the room Margolis would greet him profusely. (I witness similar scenes at our own Seminary Faculty meetings.) In that little book which Margolis wrote on the Bible he originally had considerable material about Higher Criticism. Adler and Sulzberger objected and Margolis without any protest deleted whatever did not suit them. It seems that M. was a man who was passionately fond of comfort and ease, and the fear of forfeiting them made him the coward he was.

An interesting side light on the attitude of some of the Reform rabbinate was thrown by what Dobsevage had to say about a certain Rabbi Rubenstein who was at one time a rabbi at Baltimore and who is now in the life insurance business. Dobsevage had told Rubenstein about his father who had been a noted exegete and grammarian. He then asked Rubenstein what his Hebrew interests were. The rabbi replied "I don't read Hebrew. I am mainly interested in the Romance languages."

* * *

Friday, July 29, 1932

I am engaged at the present time in a task which I have undertaken mainly for fear that by refusing to undertake it I might read myself out permanently from the class of people who write for the Jewish Quarterly Review. About a half a year ago Cyrus Adler who, in addition to his dozen other jobs is also editor of the JQR, wrote to me asking whether I would review a book by Edmund Stein entitled "Philo und der Midrasch." I knew it meant spending a good deal of time on a matter that would divert me from my general interests, but for the reason stated I consented to write the review some time this summer. Of course, if I had felt that I would learn nothing from this task I would not have undertaken it at all. I knew that I would be compelled to read Philo not only in the translation but also in the original, and that I would become better informed about the whole problem of the relationship between Alexandrian and Palestinian Judaism. But unfortunately the little book by Stein is so impossibly stupid, so full of contradictions, and so far from proving his main thesis that the agada is a link between the literal and the allegorical interpretation that I am at a loss to find anything good to say about it.

I am grateful, however, for the many interesting books to which this task has introduced me. I learned about the edition of Philo by Leopold Cohn and Winland and of the translation into German by Cohen; I have read considerable parts of Frankel's writings on the subject of Philo and the Septuagint; I have been introduced to Carl Siegfried's Philo. But as usual I miss in all that they have to say on the subject anything gripping or inspiring, anything that throws a revealing light on the inner life of the Jews either in Alexandria or in Palestine. The question whether Philo knew Hebrew id discussed at great length by these writers and withal that I am unconvinced by the

arguments which they advance that he was totally ignorant. Edmund Stein in another little book by him on Philo as exegete makes him out to be nothing more than a collector of interpretations that he heard in the various synagogues. All of that is so depressing and disconcerting that I wish I hadn't dipped into these studies, because I hate to be left in suspense about all of these matters and yet I cannot afford to devote to them the time I would need to arrive at some more definite and constructive conclusions than I have been able to arrive at from my last two weeks' reading on the subject.

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Saturday night, July 30, 1932

Last Thursday I took a trip on the Hudson Dayboat Line up to Poughkeepsie and back. I went alone and read practically the entire time I was on the boat, nine hours at a stretch. The book that held me spellbound was "God" by Middleton Murry. Except for his exaggerated opinion of Jesus I found him articulating my own ideas about God and religion. The concluding part of the book in which he argues against identifying his concept of Life with God annoyed me. In fact he contradicts there what he himself says somewhere in the earlier part of the book where he refers to Keats that the concept God is the only one which fits the religious attitude towards Reality. Even his idea that prayer is incompatible with his conception of Life as an organic whole is wrong, because prayer would in that case simply mean becoming conscious of Life as an organic and integrated whole and permitting such awareness to influence one's mood and conduct. All the praise that he bestows upon Jesus belongs more justly to Spinoza.

In spite, however, of these strictures that I would make on the book I found myself in a mood ofexaltation while I read it. A book of that kind produces in me a genuine religious experience, such as prayer ought to produce. I just yearn for that kind of ex-

perience as a thirsty man for water. No matter how hard I try to find satisfaction for this yearning in the traditional Jewish liturgy. I come away bitterly disappointed. Once in a while when there is a large congregation or when I am particularly saddened by the tragedy of the Jewish people, I find myself responding with my whole being to the words of the kedushab (p.287)

But the rest of the time I am bored to nausea by the infinite repetition of the promise to extol God without actually saying anything that gives the least suggestion of what God means to human life.

All in all, I am in an exceedingly wretched frame of mind these days as I witness the rapid breaking up of Jewish religious and cultural values. I feel like one who has been washed ashore watching the waves working havoc with his stranded ship. Some time ago I resumed the rite of tephilin, but I simply could not keep it up. After I would put them on I would find myself unable to recite the prescribed morning prayers because those prayers had palled on me. I would therefore turn to the Bible or the Talmud in the hope of getting into a mood that justified the wearing of the tephilim. Instead, I found myself looking up dictionaries and commentaries. So why do all that with the tephilim on, which made the looking up of the necessary information more difficult. The result is that except for grace after meals, I do not pray. This I consider as being totally incongruous with my innermost feelings about religion. I shall not be happy unless I succeed in formulating for myself a series of prayers that will express my own religious needs.

It is not only Jewish ritual and public worship that I see disintegrating. Sabbath observance and the dietary laws are also vanishing fast. My son-in-law could not possibly make a living if he were to refrain from practicing his profssion as a lawyer on the Sabbath.

What remains of the Sabbath spirit? This morning the discussion at the table turned on the question of removing the blood from the meat as a condition to having the meat kosher. The children insisted that that practice impoverished the food value of the meat. Selma, who is the most outspoken of my children, said "This business of salting the meat is utter nonsense." What could I say in reply? Could I advance as an argument the biblical assertion (p.?88) ? Only a couple of weeks ago I myself pointed out to the men I was teaching at the Seminary that this assertion was based on the primitive belief that the demonic force which the ancients ascribed to living beings resided chiefly in the blood, and for that reason they regarded the blood as belonging essentially to the gods and therefore taboo.

Such are the thoughts that keep tugging away at my heart all the time, but especially these days when I am doomed to unrelieved loneliness. There is not a person around in this large city with whom I can exchange a word about any of these problems. I am a stranger in the midst of my own family. Not a single one of my children ever affords me the pleasure of reading or discussing with me a book or essay of serious import. I wouldn't even dream of asking them to read together with me anything of Jewish interest. They have never read through anything I have written. I doubt whether I could get them to read, e.g. Schmarya Lewin's autobiography even if they knew that my life depended on their reading it. I cannot even get them to establish an intellectual common denominator with me in terms of the great world classics. And yet I have no right to complain. They might have been much worse disposed towards matters of Jewish interest than they actually are. Thank God that in matters of character they are not wanting. They possess sufficient sense of justice and kindliness to make them likable. But, of course, all that doesn't touch the deeper springs of intellectual and spiritual cameraderie which is totally lacking in their relationship to me.

Monday, August 1, 1932

What a perverted sense of values the Talmudic sages often exhibit! Take, e.g. the following: (p. 288)

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Monday, August 8, 1932, Camp Modin, Canaan, Maine

Last Friday I completed the review of Edmund Stein's little book on Philo and the Midrash. The sense of having carried out an undertaking concerning which I had had misgivings whether it was within my power to do justice to it filled my soul with "the peace that passeth understanding." I was not fair to myself when I said in one of the previous items in this Journal that I was moved to accept the invitation to write the review through considerations of vanity. If I had not felt that I would become a little bit more acquainted with Alexandrinian Judaism in the course of the reading I would have to do in connection with the review. I would not have allowed my vanity to sway me. I am interested in knowing not merely superficially but intimately and in detail fashion just what the Jews did when instead of combating Europeanism they seriously tried to come to terms with it. What they did in Palestine to stem the tide of Hellenization is no criterion of what we may count Jews to do when they must make peace with Europeanism or succumb. It simply means that they succeeded in isolating themselves from an influence which sooner or later they would have to reckon with. If Palestinian Judaism had not been in a state of temporary isolation it might not have developed the trait of sturdiness during the years when Phariseeism was in the making. But so long as Judaism refused to recognize in Europeanism an element of incontestable value which it could not afford to repudiate, it only postponed the ultimate trial of its ability to survive as one of the dominant forces in civilization. That trial we of the present generation are undergoing. What a source

of strength and encouragement it would be if we could look back to a similar test of strength in the past, a test from which the Jews came forth in no wanting in their Jewishness! Their experience at Alexandria I thought might prove to have been such a test. But the more I read about Philo and his contemporaries, and the more I read his own writings the more convinced I became that the Judaism of the Alexandrinian Jews was as sterile, insipid and platitudinous as the Judaism of Temple Emanuel. They were completely ignorant of Hebrew and had no capacity for appreciating the distinctive and unique values which evolved out of the national life and history of their people. The Tannaim and Amoraim (especially the latter) were oft provincial, narrow and intolerant, but there is more of the bone and marrow of genuine human feeling and experience to the least of their dicta than there is to pages of Philo's colorless generalizations about the virtues.

All this ought to be a useful lesson to me. It ought to serve me as a warning against staking too much upon the success I might achieve in synthesizing Jewish tradition with the ideas of a Dewey, a Whitehead or a Hocking. Philo probably thought that he rendered Judaism immune to the danger of disintegration when he made it speak the language of Stoicism and Platonism. Nothing of the kind. If all it could do was to express in halting and roundabout style what the Platonists and the Stoics said more beautifully and directly, why bother with it at all. Unless it can add to the sum of human values Judaism must disappear. Only by being a civilization in a land of its own can it be in a position to enlarge the range of the true, the good and the beautiful.

To my regret I seldom have time to read novels. They are only one remove from direct contact with life, whereas the world of general concepts with which my mind deals are two removes from life.

I refer, of course, to good novels, of which they are aplenty. Some time last week I began eading South Wind and I finished it today while on my way to camp.

The trouble with books which deal with general concepts is that you choose only those that happen to agree with your own point of view, that confirm you in your opinions and flatter your self-conceit. Novels have a way with them - if they are at all worthwhile - of irritating you, of knocking your complacency into a cocked hat. Here am I, for example, working on a book which is to substitute new values for old in the significance which the Jewish festivals are to have for us. These new values are to derive from the conception of God as essentially the affirmation of life's worthwhileness. It is true I did buy recently a book by some physician - I don't recall the name of either book or author - who tries to prove that life is the very antithesis of what religion cracks it up to be. I bought the book with the view of incorporating in my own treatment of religion the negative claims advanced by the author. I was quite sure I could refute them easily. But South Wind doesn't argue. It beguiles the reader into believing that life is hopelessly insignificant, that there is no such thing as unselfishness, that people who make sacrifices for what they regard as principle are nothing but masochists who want to avenge themselves upon society by annoying their fellows with the untoward consequences of self-denial. I cannot conceive anything more truly representative of sophistry at its worst. You talk about making the worse appear the better cause. Could that be done more deftly than Norman Douglass does it in South Wind, the novel with a moral, the moral being that there are no morals? It is strange that history should repeat itself with such fidelity. The modern novels of Aldous Huxley, Norman Douglass type are performing the very function performed in ancient Greece by the Sophists.

It is too late in the day to hope that another Socrates or Plato would express the untenability of the claims advanced by the

modern successes of the Sophists. By the way, I could not help enjoying Philo's fling at the Sophists of his day, every time he got a chance at them in the course of his interpretation of Scriptures. This is the difference between the Sophists and the upholders of religion and ethics. The contention of the Sophists sounds just as modern in the works of their successors as they did in their own day; whereas the apologetics of the religionists and ethicists soon grow antiquated, and every new age calls for a completely different type of defense.

Douglass directs his shafts not only against religion and morality in general. He keeps his most poisonous ones for his onslaught against Judaism. And the worst of it is that much of what he says about Judaism's idea of God, its intolerance, its anti-humanism is not without warrant. While I cannot say that I am very happy when I come across such denigrations of Judaism, my approach to Judaism does not at all require the sickening sentimentalism in which our Jewish teachers and preachers indulge when referring to Judaism of tradition. My approach on the contrary, definitely avows utter discontent with Judaism as it has been handed down to us. Nothing that he can say about the Bible or rabbinic literature can upset me, because I frankly maintain that our salvation as Jews depends upon our breaking the spell which the past has exercised upon us. There is a passage somewhere in Middleton Murry's book "God" that corresponds with my conception of the Jewish past. He advocates knowing all about religion in order to be able to transcend the need for it, or something to that effect. I would say the same about Traditional Judaism. It should be studied as a means to the rise of a new Judaism. Unless we shall know the past and understand it it will always haunt us. To lay the ghosts of our ancestors we should know all about them.

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Tuesday, August 9, 1932

My coming out here to Camp Modin with Lena is due mainly to the last conference I had with Drs. Honor and Golub. It then became evident that there was still a great deal of ground to be covered in the discussion of the Council for the Reconstruction (or will it be "for the Advancement?) of American Jewish life. Since Lena and I had been planning to take our vacation these days in any event, it occurred to me that it would be an excellent idea if Solomon Goldman who, according to Honor, had been planning to come to Modin for a few weeks and Dushkin together with the three of us would together go over carefully the entire program for the November conference.

While waiting for the others to arrive I have started thinking about the address which I am scheduled to give at the opening of the JIR in September. The following is a rough sketch of what I expect to say:

The function of the spiritual leader, from earliest days to our own has been to afford guidance in untraversed regions of human life. The priest, prophet and judge, each in his own way helped those that came to them for advice in situations that could not be met with some rule o' thumb. It is the element of the unfamiliar and the novel that calls for the knowledge, insight, courage that go to make up spiritual leadership.

That element characterizes human life of the present to a more marked degree than it did human life in the past. Consequently there is more need of spiritual leadership than ever before. This is especially true in the case of Jewish life. For the element of the novel and unprecedented is conspicuous in 1) the social structure which the Jewish people will have to achieve by reason of the change in the civil status of the Jew and the development of Palestine. Such questions as what shall be the relation of Jewish civilization to the other

civilizations which must go to shape the life of the Jews in the Diaspra, etc. 2) the emergent religious ideas. Spiritual values are being challenged. It is not enough for the spiritual leader is to assert one's belief in God. He has to correlate his belief with experience. The problem of diversity of religious belief in its relation to Jewish unity, etc. 3) the emergent ethics. The sensitizing of the conscience in matters economic, the dulling of the conscience in matters sexual, etc.

The function of a rabbinical training should be analogous to that of a group which is organizing an expedition to some uncharted region. All the possible knowledge and training and equipment that might be of help in charting the new region are mobilized. The results of axquired experiences and achieved civilization are utilized as a means of orientation in the new and the untried. If this analogy were kept in mind both students and faculty would learn to take the proper attitude toward the conventional subject matter of the rabbinical training. The students would learn to appreciate the necessity of appropriating as much knowledge of the Jewish past as possible; the faculty would learn to make what they teach relevant to the problems of the present.

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Wednesday, August 10, 1932

I made it a point to have Finkelstein go on with his plan to have the Rabbinical Assembly present its point of view in the form of a symposium on the various phases of Jewish life and religion. Yesterday I received a letter from him enclosing a detailed formulation of the questions to be discussed under each of the topics. I found his conception of each topic satisfactory except the one I had undertaken to discuss, the Place of Religion in Jewish life. In my reply to him I am sending him the following reformulation of the questions under my topic:

"The article should discuss the conceptions which prevail at the present time among the different Jewish groups with regard to the relation of religion to the rest of Jewish life, and point out with which of these conceptions the RA is identified. It should grapple with the main issue which turns upon what each group understands by religion and how it conceives religion to be related to the various expressions of collective life, such as nationalism, language, literature, laws, mores, arts, etc. The discussion should also indicate some of the practical differences which the RA conception of the place of religion in Jewish life would make in the American Jewish scene."

I also wrote that while I thought his outline was excellent as a whole, there was one serious omission. "If the R_a point of view differs both from the Orthodox and the Reformist - else why talk about it - that fact ought in some way to be made clear. Somewhere, therefore, in the description of each topic the writer ought to be asked to point out the special aspect which is indicative of the R^A point of view."

I deliberately wrote the foregoing to Finkelstein because, unless I keep after him to have the symposium bring out the differentia of the RA, he is certain to have it consist of a lot of platitudes which Orthodox and Reformists alike would say "Amen" to. I shall not let him or any of the other men who are to write for the symposium evade the issue if I can help it.

Rabbi Solomon Goldman arrived here this afternoon and we spent together about three hours talking about things in general. He, of course, did most of the talking. The two of us have so much in common ideologically that there is hardly any need for our discussing general principles. Of practical experiences I have very little that is worth telling. He, on the other hand, comes in contact with all sorts of people in the course of a very active ministry. This is why he had to do all the talking.